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THE KISS OF APOLLO

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THE KISS OF APOLLO

BY

MARTHA GILBERT DICKINSON BIANCHI

*Author of "A Modern Prometheus," "The Cuckoo's Nest,"
"A Cossack Lover," "The Sin of Angels," etc.*

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To
a New England Vesuvius

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THE KISS OF APOLLO

CHAPTER I

JUDITH

AT the drawing-room window of a town house a butler paused for a moment before lowering the shade. It was early dusk. The street lights had just sprung into their regular lines of glare. For an hour the great shaded lantern in the hallway had been burning and now as Martin stood, cord in hand, to drop the last tea-coloured silk shade that shut the world outside, he gave an envious sigh for this hour of the street. For him those after dark were fully absorbed in their own cares and triumphs, but this half hour, unless there was company for tea, left him without zest or duty, just as the lure and passion of the streets became seductive. Martin, who was Swiss, had never heard of mob psychology. It had got hold of him nevertheless and often gave him a bad quarter of an hour.

A motor drew up to the curb now and he started

back. His caged eyes completed their inspection of the interior; a drawing-room empty, elegant, inexpressive as its neighbours. In the half light of disuse there was a haze of gloom that hung between the heavy rugs and ornate ceilings, bathed the drooping palms, and the dark oil paintings after old masters, and made the trifles scattered upon inlaid tables look frivolous — as some one laughing in church. Martin's scrutiny could find nothing out of place; nothing to occupy his half hour until the bell began to ring as the family returned to dress for dinner. It was too late for visits; too early for guests. The tradesmen and furnishers kept the lower door animated, where delivery boys ran in and out, getting a cuff or a cake, as cook felt disposed. The postman lingered for a word, the mending woman passed out, and a friendly policeman waved his hand to the jolly group below stairs. But up in Martin's realm all was hushed, sombre, superior. This was his world. He had no other, except on the third Sunday afternoon of each month, and the second Saturday between luncheon and dinner. He let the shade slide carefully down now and opened the door to his master, accompanied by another gentleman, and as there was no order further, turned to go back to his pantry for a glimpse of the evening news. Mr. Braddish would go up to the library, where the usual syphon and Scotch were in readiness, and Mrs. Braddish

would not be in until just time to dress for dinner. His table was finished. His taste was perfection and there would be nothing to change. His flowers suited him. His wines were waiting at the proper temperature. Off duty he was not, but he was entitled to sit down and read a bit, with an eye always out for emergencies.

A door blew together somewhere downstairs and another at the same time quietly shut near him, but he did not heed it, having fallen upon a chapter in the murder trial that had charmed him. Only the bell could recall him now, and that did not happen to ring. Housed as well as a caged tiger, denied all prerogatives of free manhood, captive of luxury, a domestic slave was Martin; but with the Swiss peaks in his mountaineer's heart and the cow-bells of Chamounix ringing silvery in his ears, down from the heights whence the herds wound to his father's chalet at this same hour of the evening, the magical hour of return to the fold.

On the floor of the back drawing-room before the gas log lay Judith, full length, like a Japanese junk; her book open on the peach-bloom Bokara rug before her, her head propped on her hands. As oblivious as Martin to the latch key in the lock and entering figures of a man and woman. They came into the dusky drawing-room without speaking, looked at each other full in the eyes and kissed. A slight sound recalled them. Becoming accus-

tomed to the half light, they saw the child on the rug.

"Did she hear us come in, do you think?" Reggy Pennell asked rather anxiously.

Pauline Braddish shook her head. "Dead to the world with a book before her."

"Lucky for you! You are reckless, though!"

She raised her eyebrows to denote indifference, then called to her little sister peremptorily, "Judith—"

No answer.

"Judith, come here, dear."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I am busy."

"What are you doing?"

"I am reading."

"Take your book up to the nursery, dear."

Judith got up. "I am too old to be ordered," she said quietly, "and you know it, Paula. The baby makes a noise up there and the nurses interrupt me. I can't be in the library because Ferdinand has a man there with him and sent me out, and Martin sent me out of the dining-room and you forbade me to read in the pantry. I am not doing any harm here. Why can't I stay?"

"Yes, why not? Let her stay," coaxed Pennell.

The woman scented disapproval in his glance. It was too absurd of him to act as if the child was

neglected! "I thought you were spending the afternoon with Evelyn," the older sister said, in extenuation.

"I did go, but I came home. She had never read 'Paradise Lost,' or 'Marius,' or the 'City of Dreadful Night,' or 'The Mill on the Floss,' or hardly anything!—"

"And how old is Miss Evelyn?" asked Pennell gravely.

"Twelve," said Judith scornfully. "I am not quite eleven."

"I am lots older than that and I have not read them either," he told her. "That is, I have never read 'Paradise Lost,'" observing her contempt.

"Honestly?" she stared at him. "I read that when I was six, the first time," she said carelessly.

"But in the city we have so little time to read—" he began, as if it was a matter to be cleared up between them.

"I know it. That is what makes you all sound so silly, talking the same thing to each other louder and louder," she agreed. "I like my brother Reverdy's way best. He does not hardly ever talk, but when he does—my! It is like the Iliad. I like to talk with Martin better than any one else here. I want to go back to Reverdy, and he wants to go back to his home in the Alps, so we talk together quite often—" she broke off, a little quiver weakening the defiance of her mouth.

Pauline rang and Martin appeared.

"Go up to the nursery with Miss Judith, and tell nurse to keep her happy till bed-time." She gave the order with a smile. Pauline had to be liked even by her servants. Let it be vanity or mere cowardice, she could not bear a face about her that refused her its entire allegiance.

Judith straightened herself stiffly. "I shall go myself. You need not send me by Martin as if I was a dog," she said haughtily, then with a flash of friendliness in her voice, "Good night, Martin! I am so sorry I can't help you wipe the glasses to-night," she called back, as she walked off alone toward the stairs.

It was Pennell, again, who suggested to his hostess after dinner, that before they went on to the play she had better see if the child was asleep. Pauline thought it sign of a new softness in him, attributable to herself, and went; trying to play up and look responsive to his domestic mood. She reached the second story in time to find Judith on her knees. Pauline failed to catch the beauty of pose or the poetry of faith as the young voice rose and fell in loud whispered entreaties for heaven's mercy on her sister. With the insistence of an eremite she implored forgiveness for Ferdinand's gluttony and Pauline's envy and unchastity.

Mrs. Braddish waited until it really grew too uncomfortably embarrassing, then withdrew and sent

the nurse in to tell Miss Judith to get into bed without delay. What could the child possibly mean? Who could have put such ideas in her head? Suppose the other servants had heard her! Could she have merely played preoccupation earlier in the evening? Had she really seen what happened, as she and Reggy entered the drawing-room, supposing themselves alone? It was too vexing. She went back to the child's room now, more annoyed than she had ever been with Judith.

"You had better stop at praying for yourself, dear. You are too young to understand many things, but it is not kind or right to speak ill of others' faults in your prayers—" she began, when Judith broke in, disconcertingly assured—

"It is not tale-bearing, for God knows, Himself, before I call His attention to things," she claimed frankly.

"Well, never mind; perhaps—but you cannot judge of others' faults and it is better to pray for your own."

Judith's eyes filled. "But they are three of the seven deadly sins, Paula!" she cried. "You all do them here, and you will go to hell if some one does not pray you out."

Pauline glanced at the clock. If Reggy heard this she should have hysterics. But poor Judith was so troubled, how could she leave the child without comforting her?

"Who told you anything about the seven deadly sins?" she asked, amazed.

"Mary Haggerty," replied Judith promptly. "And I have read her prayer book all through. Julian Craigie told me, too; he is the boy I play with at home. He is a Catholic, because his mother was, and I am going to be one as soon as Reverdy dies. He won't let me now."

"Really? Why not?"

"He says wait till I know as much as Cardinal Newman, and then I may and welcome."

"How are you getting along with that?"

"I have read his 'Apologia,' all of it,—but it is the prayer to the Guardian Angel I love most. Listen, I will say it to you." She sat up and repeated it in her sweet shrill voice—

"Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
To whom His love commits me here,
Ever this day be by my side.
To light and guard and rule and guide."

I say it when I am lonely or frightened at night, and it keeps off the fear. You like it, don't you? You won't make me not do it, will you? Reverdy might not like it, but you won't tell him, will you, Paula? Just while I am here. I am not afraid when I am near him."

And Pauline not only promised but she kissed the little sister who was so awkward an addition

to her gay household, and went down with a strangely unusual expression on her pretty face that puzzled Reggy Pennell all through the opera.

Judith had been a queer experiment. The first morning she was there, Ferdinand Braddish had thought he must be out of his head, when something had come between him and his newspaper as he sat with his breakfast untasted before him,—for a soft blur of hair swept his face, while a pair of very red lips touched his own. A morning kiss! When had such a phenomenon occurred to him? He associated kisses with hasty good-byes or casual welcome-homes after hot journeys; or as things of the night; feverish, jaded, impassioned things of once upon a time; things forgotten or to be forgiven. The eager, cool, loving little greeting made him ashamed and yet proud. Suddenly he became valiant and hopeful. It was like the effect of a clean dip off the yacht in northern waters. He had come to recognise it as a part of his day. He even remembered it downtown in that mysterious vortex of busy men. The clean affection of the child touched him. He found himself wishing his own youngster might have something of his little Aunt Judith. There was a vigour, an unspeakable humanity about her, a sweetness unwasted even by her brusque simplicity. He felt, too, a strength that might be potent for good or evil in no limited measure. Mischievous, she was not, as a child. As a

woman, she would perhaps lack coquetry, but she would cause pain and suffer it. She would love and hate—he was sure. And he was himself no analyst, only a man like thousands of others sharing his environment.

The day after the Catholic outburst Pauline's luncheon party settled comfortably to bridge. The children were safe in the Park. Their daily airing gave Judith a breath of the country and sent her home quite subdued. She rarely cared to run about with her hoop, but marched gravely along while the nurses moved slowly up and down, or sat and watched the horses,—never the people, who seemed beneath her attention. It was not very diverting. It was even a little sad, but it was better than the house, because there was the sky and the first green grass, and for several days the robins had begun to appear,—only a few, and rare enough yet to give the country heart a throb of returning spring, and set her wild with suppressed longing.

This afternoon, in a brief erratic excursion away from the slow procession of perambulators, she came full on the first crocuses, dancing in the grass under the impulse of a light south wind. There was for the moment no one to warn her and with a cry of delight she gathered both hands full of the beloved little playfellows, happy for the first time in this ice-bound city. But alas for Judith! Even as she flew like a butterfly from patch to patch of the frail

darlings, the hand of the law was over her. O'Flaherty, the biggest of the many big blue policemen, could not believe his eyes. A child, a lady, by her looks, picking flowers in Central Park!

"Here!" he called. "Come out o' that!"

She did not move.

"Come out o' that, I say!" he warned again, louder.

She raised her eyes without impertinence, but without a trace of fear. "Were you speaking to me?" she asked, politely.

"Sure, and who else? Come out o' that, I say." He motioned to the pathway with his big hand.

"Just see what I found," she said happily, holding up the flowers as he approached her.

He shook his head. "It is a fine you'll get for this, Missy. You have broke the law." He chuckled as he said it, though. He was fond of children, was O'Flaherty, and this one was a beauty sure.

Judith flushed at his tone. "They are not your flowers!" she retorted. "They are God's flowers. You could not make one to save your life!"

At this insolence he took her by her arm.

"Whoever made 'em, it's your folks will have 'em to pay for!" he exclaimed, vexed by the indignity of her indifference to authority.

"Let go my arm. I have not done anything wrong."

"What is your name and address?" he asked, placing her in the promenade and still holding her like a culprit.

"My name is Judith."

"Where do you live?"

"Just over there,"—she pointed toward one of the stately line of houses on the east side of the Park.

"Well, wherever is your nurse?"

"I am grown up. I don't have a nurse. I have slept alone for years!" she told him haughtily. "And please let go of me. Your hand is very hot and heavy."

Then as a crowd began to group about them, round a turn in the shrubbery came a breathless Irish nursemaid.

"She is under arrest on three counts," O'Flaherty explained. "Walking on the grass, stealing flowers and resisting an officer," he enumerated on his big fingers. "Some one will have to pay for this."

"Whatever made you be so naughty, Miss Judith?" scolded both nurses together. "Oh, Mr. O'Flaherty, now, you wouldn't be the one to hold a child and get us into trouble! It is not the gentleman like yourself to make trouble for ladies?"

"He is not a gentleman," Judith said calmly. "He is a policeman. And he does not know anything about flowers or how God gives them free to all children."

"They are the property of the Park," declared O'Flaherty to the crowd.

"Oh! then I suppose you claim the birds are yours and the sky!" taunted Judith, making matters worse at once.

"That 'ull be for the Court to decide," decreed this instrument of its power. "Come along!"

In the thick of it Reggy Pennell rode by on his bay cob, and drew up where the bridle path intersected the crocus arena. The nursemaid hung her head. The policeman blinked, but Judith nodded to him without a second thought of her crimes.

"I am so glad you rode this way, Mr. Pennell," she said cordially. "Won't you just give this man a dollar for me. I will pay you next time I see you," she assured him serenely. "You see, I picked some flowers growing wild, to give to those poor children over there on that bench,— and he has been very horrid about it."

Pennell slipped off his horse. He smiled at the entire group, then drew a slim snakeskin purse from his breast pocket and handed the officer a bill without looking at it. The keen eye of the Irishman detected the V. The next minute he was busy with a fractious horse some paces distant. Pennell looked after him, still smiling. Then he offered to put Judith up in his place. Her eyes went wild with pleasure, but she drew back. "Paula would

not let me," she said, her voice trembling with eagerness.

"No? Well, then, let's walk along a bit." He wanted to help the child somehow, poor, homesick baby! "Can you ride?" he asked her now. "Do you think she would let me take you out some day, if I brought the horse my sister's children use?"

"Oh!" was all she could say. Pennell thought he had never seen such raw longing. It made him feel queer. Funny to be near a body that felt as hard as that about anything!

"Do you like horses?" he asked, not knowing what else to say.

"I adore them," she whispered.

"Come, Miss Judith. Nurse is waiting. It is getting chilly for the baby," urged the nursemaid.

"We will fix it up with your sister," Pennell promised; then as she turned to go she put up her lips to be kissed. That made him feel queerer. To him she was a strange little specimen of her sex in embryo.

"May I have a flower?" he begged. She handed him the whole stolen bunch. He gravely selected a mauve one, fastened it in his coat, then he suddenly stooped and kissed her again, and swinging himself into the saddle rode away, raising his hat to her as formally as if she had been sister Pauline herself.

CHAPTER II

REVERDY'S PROMISE

BUT that ride, of which Judith dreamed ecstatically all night, never came off. In perplexity and no little vexation Pauline wrote to her brother how trying their experiment was proving.

Dear Rev.,

What a hopeless child you have sent me! She is not exactly "enfant terrible," but she is impossible in every way. *She bids the servants good night—regularly—* and prays aloud for my sins and Ferdinand's!! She has read everything and quotes the Bible and French novels indiscriminately to support her preposterous arguments. She began by kissing Ferd good morning, and keeps it up. He has not got over the shock yet. There is something about her nobody can resist. She had a scrap with a Park policeman over some flowers she picked, and the next night he arrived at the front door with a whole armful of jonquils for her, and a stray bull-pup for her to keep! She treats Reggy Pennell, who is an habitué of long standing (quite l'ami de famille), as if he were scum of the earth,—or did until he offered to take her riding. And she won't play with the Blaisedell children or stay in the nursery. With all my engagements of

course I cannot be tied up to amusing her, and she really looks white and all eyes. I shall have to send her back. What else can I do? She says the most awful things — par example, that Mrs. De Ruyter Vail looks like Dürer's Eve,— or a Quarles Emblem, in décolleté! — pas si mal, is it? But no matter how I reprove her or what punishment she gets, she keeps a provoking kind of confidence in herself and her opinions. I never saw such eyes, and they see so much! She makes me dreadfully uncomfortable. Ferd spoils her, and Reggy puts her on, by pretending all sorts of things. I ought to have had her here years ago. You have started her wrong and you will have to go on with her. She embarrasses me all the time, baby that she is. It is like having the stark naked Truth about. I admit I am unable to cope with her. Do you think it too awful of me?

With fond love, your distracted

PAULA.

To which came Reverdy's reply by special delivery:

ALL SOULS' RECTORY,

The Second Sunday after Trinity.

Dear Sister Pauline,

Judith had better come back to me, for a time at least. You see I have not fitted her for the great world in which you revolve. Perhaps I should not have been able to. Perhaps I remember it too vividly to want to. But do nothing to hurt the darling or let her imagine you are returning her because she does not please you,—like a discarded purchase. She has tragic stuff in her, baby as she is, and there is something almost classic about her heroic point of view, her fine disregard for the immoralities of sanctioned convention, that is too rare to prevent or pervert intentionally. We were very blessed up here together,

and this was all a mistake such as only a blundering bachelor, like me, would have made. Tell her I am only half alive without her,—which is true enough! And do not touch her self-respect by scolding her for the truth there is in her. I hope Ferdinand is well and you are not too put out with me for giving Judith so impracticable a start on life's highway. Hers will not stop short of the Infinite. I am assured of that. May yours, dear, be always near that of your devoted brother

REVERDY.

So Judith went back to her brother in the hills, and the city whirled on its way.

Pauline sparkled in town during the season and went abroad to replenish her marvellous wardrobe in summer. Sometimes Reggy Pennell went along, sometimes Ferdinand Braddish stopped in New York. And always Judith stayed in the country where the stream ran down hill as fast as it could, and the path led uphill more slowly to the little memorial church, erected on the spot where Reverdy's Love had been killed in a cruel accident. The stone cross, bearing her name, enclosed in a single grass-plot facing the east, had seemed to him the stile where they had last parted; mortal and immortal took leave of each other here, till he should be fit to follow her. He lived in a continued trance of spiritual communion with her and saintly service for his people, who came to him from the factory villages stretching along the river and the scattered hillside about, regardless often of sect or creed.

His troth was steadfast. His mouth knew no kiss but that of the green grass above her. It was the cruel love of separation, but when he lingered there till the hermit thrush sang out of the deepening twilight, he felt that he had been as near her as a mortal may approach immortality; and that God had not let her forget. To him she was in the winds, against his heart as he buffeted his way on his merciful errands. To him, she was in the early frail flowers, lifting serene eyes to him from the darkness where she lay, to the blue sky above them. His infinite yearning found solace there. He would return to the Rectory with his lamp re-lit and his loins re-girt. And here, under the sloping eaves, Judith dreamed her dreams again, and down in Reverdy's library, which was an extension built on with no least regard for outside effect, and softened by deep windows with leaded panes, she read side by side with the brother she loved, and quickly forgot the transient misery of her exile with Pauline. This library of Reverdy's was a place she rarely invaded until evening, unless the weather made it a happy refuge from dismal reality in imaginary worlds of her own. As she grew older it gave her an unformulated but increasing impression of a rich exuberant nature, chastened. There was something of ascetic restraint in the very way the day was fading through the low windows, that kept even the firelight from a meaningless frolic and lent it a

romance; half wistful reflection perhaps of her unrecognised longing to remain, as did the dear ghost of love, in this tranquil home of old books and young madonnas on the walls, with Reverdy's flowers and holy dreams.

"Das es ewig so bleibe!"

becoming her unspoken prayer for herself as it was his constantly repeated petition for her.

Reverdy's soul meant more to her than her own heart; to love him meant so much more to her than any fantastic heaven, and she knew he found solace in her silent flittings among the shelves where D'Annunzio and Shakespeare, Morris and Goethe shouldered classics and moderns with stalwart impartiality. Only one playfellow she ever brought with her here, the boy Julian of whom she had spoken to Pauline. He was a fiery little fellow, nearly five years older than Judith, with the same Puritan strain in his blood on one side, and the same haunts of chivalry delighting his inner eye. He had been brought up by his mother's brother in England, after the death of his parents in Rome, where his father's studio had been one of the famous places, difficult of access to foreigners and persistently sought. He had been loaned to his father's sister when he was ten years old, after long entreaty, that he might know something of his father's family and boyhood surroundings. She

was growing old and the dream of her life had been to see another Craigie in the old place,—the land never desecrated by ownership of an alien since the Indians withdrew.

From their earliest memory the two children had played together under the same trees where their parents had played before them. They were like brother and sister, always with the difference that Julian was of Roman birth, with something hot and imperative in his nature, that older people called “temperament,” in a low voice so his aunt should not overhear.

This was the shadow Miss Lucretia Craigie dreaded. If Julian inherited from his mother that love of Italy which had separated her from her family and faith and made her Italian by adoption and Catholic, too,—as well as taking from his father the genius that made marble an eternal lure,—what was to prevent his being drawn away from her forever?

She had taken every precaution. There had been nothing in the Craigie mansion or any of its surroundings to excite the dormant germ. She had even removed the parian Clytie, from the spot where it had smiled in immemorial insipidity, to a dark closet out of her own sleeping room, that nothing in his formative years should arouse a sensuous attitude. As yet she caught no hint of his father’s passion. Save for the way he had of looking at

animals and people in motion or repose,— which worried her at times lest his attention be turned to the undesirable subject. He was a vigorous boy, a little too much the dreamer to be mere animal, but though he allowed Judith to domineer over him from her babyhood, he did allow her, it was not that she did it contrary to his liking. That he would assert himself whenever he chose was never questioned.

One of their favourite pastimes at this point in their development was what they called playing mythology.

Acting the story of Achilles dragged round the walls of Troy had been forbidden after poor Heather, the collie, had been rescued by Reverdy from the rôle of Achilles for which they had chosen him because his yellow tail did so well for that warrior's vaunted golden hair. They never really sacrificed either, though they got ready to, and improvised processions of children, garlanded Heather for the bull, and once attempted to use a young calf,— which had views of its own on Greek tragedy, as it proved, and led them a wild dance over lawn and flower beds, tying bowknots in its anatomy, bringing its heels round both ways with a suddenness — and finally breaking the rope and dumping both children into rose bushes at the gate, inflicting scratches Saint Francis might have coveted. One moonlit night, sitting out on the stone bench

in the garden, Reverdy told them the story of Cassandra and they adopted her for a new game at once, enchanted with the possibilities.

He found them next morning, heads close over a French encyclopedia, spelling it out in detail for themselves; both assuming a fine scorn for Apollo, who did not play fair.

"Cassandre,— célèbre par sa beauté, et ses malheurs,"— it was Julian reading — "Comme elle était très belle, Apollon amoureux d'elle, tâcha d'obtenir ses faveurs"; he paused to get the full sense of what he had read, when Judith hurried ahead in English —

"He promised her whatever price she wished."

"But when she obtained the gift of prophecy she mocked him," Julian continued, "and since it was unworthy of a god to take back his gift, he demanded of her a kiss, which she dared not refuse."

"Which hindered her from prophecy and made her mad," Judith finished.

"He might have let her alone! She wasn't doing anything to him," he heard Judith say.

"He wanted to get into the game, somehow, I suppose," Julian suggested.

"That's what a boy would do, not a god!"

"What do you know about gods?" he jeered.

"I know they ought to be bigger and nobler than boys!" she triumphed.

"They weren't, though! Half of them did things

no boy would do. But never mind, come and play it, anyway," he urged.

"I won't," said Judith flatly.

"Why not? Oh, come on! You let your hair down and prophesy, and then I will come down out of the apple tree to make believe flying, and kiss you, and you go mad and rave like anything! You will love that. It will be lots more fun than Ophelia. She was a love-sick Silly, and you always get cold after drowning yourself. I am tired of the old plays. You have all the fun in Macbeth," he reminded her, "and I am just hanging round getting killed."

But play the luckless Cassandra, Judith never would. She swore she hated Apollo. It was not fair, anyway.

"Just once!" Julian teased. "I know you will love it," his male precocity clairvoyant for a scene.

"I hate Apollo. He was not a sport," she insisted.

"She broke her word to him," urged the boy.

"He bribed her!" she flashed back.

"Well, she broke her word. All girls do."

"They don't!"

"You don't," he agreed handsomely.

"You could not say it!" she boasted, unsoftened, "because it is not true."

For an instant the boy wondered if it was the kiss she objected to.

Reverdy wondered, too, a little, when he heard about it all.

Judith showed a subtle aversion to the story that puzzled her brother.

"Not that one, please," she protested, when he began on his endless store of oracles and priestess tales she had always loved,—as if in some way it chilled her with a premonition of the rôles of men and women in the world she feared and did not understand.

The first real insight he got as to her own deepest thinking came through a fragment of conversation which she opened without preamble.

"We have to love every one; it is wicked not to, I know,—but I need not ever marry if I don't want to, need I, Reverdy?" she asked him suddenly, out of a long fit of meditation when he had forgotten she was beside him.

"No, darling."

"And no one can make me, can they?"

"Not unless you want to." He did not smile, he reassured her solemnly.

"Not ever?"

"Never."

"And no man could make me want to, against my will? I mean, I can help it if I don't want to do it, in spite of any one trying to make me? There is no way that I don't understand that any one could make me want to, is there?"

Was the troubled compulsion of sex already stirring in the child? Was individuality already being warned of its endangered safety? Invincible only until assailed, was Eve already aware of a tree as dreadful as fascinating? He wished their mother had lived to cherish her in the difficult beauty of being a woman child. So he only said, in his man's attempt to set it all straight for her,

"Of course not, my darling. But I would not worry your head about that now; any more than the miscellaneous problems in the back of your algebra. When you get over to them you will know how to solve them by what has gone before and in between."

"I may get the problems, but I shall never marry," she said,—“if I don't have to — I should like to be always just myself, best.”

“Like Miss Lucretia Craigie?” was on his lips, but he checked himself, pitying the bewilderment of every young soul in its struggle to comprehend the divine but stupendous plan of the universe and its continuing life.

“All I wanted was for you to promise me. You do, Reverdy?”

“Yes, I promise.”

He hoped it was a passing preoccupation and was surprised when she asked him abruptly, after he had quite ceased to think of such matters in connection with her.—“Why did Paula get married?”

“ People get married because they love each other so much they want to be always together,” was his safe reply.

“ But, then, why didn't Paula marry Mr. Pennell?”

Reverdy did not speak.

“ Why does she have two husbands, one for out of doors and one for in the house? She does, you know. But she likes her out-of-doors one the best, and she never seems to care to stay with her in-doors one.”

“ You do not understand love and friendship yet, — that is where your mistake comes in. You will by and by. Wait and see,” Reverdy said, too shocked to be wiser for the moment.

“ I don't care about it at all, now that you have promised!” she returned happily.

It was not until Julian went back to enter Oxford that their first enforced recognition of impending change in their relations came to either of them.

Play-time was ending. After his absence had grown from a bad dream into a fact, Judith threw herself into her studies with Reverdy and went among the poor and sick with the ardour of a saint. Her thoughts were a blending harmony of all Julian had told her of the Catholic religion and its esthetic satisfactions shaded into the practical service of her

devoted ministrations. The young have a pure passion for vocation that life unhappily seems bent to destroy. Reverdy looking on, felt that she should be encouraged to the holy life of an order, but Pauline regarded this as a symptom of sheer hysteria. He knew that she must see and hear much which was unfit for her inexperience. There were shocking blows for her girlish ears, no doubt, but he kept his hands off that lovely thing, a young girl's soul, and left it to her Creator for protection. He trusted God, and almost equally he trusted Judith.

CHAPTER III

A BOY'S OPINION

REVERDY had not long to wait for confirmation. It came through a man friend who ran up for a few days in the country ostensibly, really drawn by the love he had for Reverdy, whose life he envied but could never hope to emulate. Between Reverdy, the mystic, almost saint, and this Orren Kerr, a strange intimacy had sprung up, grown and intensified till it was a naturally accepted fibre in the life of each. The taciturn, desperate young woman-hater, born without illusions, and this older man, whose dead Love and religion were inextricably wound, had grown fond of each other without any common ground of belief or much experience shared. The refreshing worldliness of Orren, with his hard, bitter impersonal, uncompromising way of relating people and things, and even the tendencies of society, came into the measured tranquillity of Reverdy's life sharply as brine to the lips of Odysseus after the surfeiting calms. They sat to-night, one on either

side of the fire, with the rain falling outside, and Judith as usual reading a little further back; the shaded light falling sweetly on her serene beauty; the bulldog Patmos cuddled close against her knee, until overcome with warmth and happiness he sank in a drowse at her feet. Orren Kerr let his eyes rest on her, when he raised them from the flame, more often than he knew.

"What about Latimer, now? Do you ever see him?" Reverdy was asking.

"Drinks too much. Lost his waist line; made a fortune getting divorces for society women," jerked out Orren. "Southern, you know,— it works out that way. Puts up a bluff of chivalry, gets 'em alimony if their working half refuses an extra pair of diamond earrings, on grounds of non-support. 'Lovely woman in distress'—'Champion of the weak'—and all that rot. He has made more money breaking into homes than any professional burglar. Big broad-shouldered chap, steady eye, gentle manner, awfully deferential to the witness, but grills 'em till they say black is white and perjure themselves and win their case. Women trust him. Know that breed?"

"Happily married?"

"I believe so. It is a case of shoemaker's children with him. No divorce for him! He knows too well what it costs."

"It is awful," said Reverdy, thinking aloud.

"It is included in the high cost of living now," snapped Orren.

"How Bentham used to sing!" exclaimed Reverdy, "when it snowed and the fountain was frozen in the white garden, and those crimson curtains shut us all in with the music. Those were nights! Where is Harrington now?"

"Dead. Dead in poverty, too. Rich in Chicago, heard of in Australia, down on his luck in Mexico, then dying alone in extremity in Paris,—his 'Strad' pawned for a last drink."

They were silent a little,—these memories were too suggestive for speech. Memories of the university days when music and love sprang up in that home where they had first met.

"Ever hear from Wrenburn?" he asked, shaking off the hasheesh of dear association with an effort.

"He is a heretic. I mean, a victim of Higher Criticism. He knows Hezekiah was not written by Cleopatra, and he has told of it, worse luck!"

"Did he marry?"

"Yes, to a parallel line, who conducts Bible study columns and gives stereopticon talks on jolly jaunts from Joppa to Jericho. They have no children. He looks old."

"Have you kept up with Vining?"

"He went into the Church and eats fish and looks tame in petticoats. He probably calls it pentecostal."

"He was never a man of brain predominant."

"Consummate ignorance and piety often come hand in hand, I have noticed."

"He is a most devoted Churchman," Reverdy objected.

"Oh, yes, the Methody convert is the 'nouveau riche' of religion, always," Orren retorted.

"And his sister Bella, the beauty we all used to admire?"

"Bella died. She was not made of good substantial dust. She was just fuzz. She did not return to dust accordingly, she was just burned up probably in the August drought."

"Poor Bella! Her marriage went all wrong. Men are beasts sometimes," admitted Reverdy, sadly.

"Women have been known to be a little lower than the angels," suggested Orren. "And now, when they have more opportunities than ever, they act like area cats. With your life and temperament you could not possibly conceive what they are! I am going to get out,— where there are none. I am going to hike for the desert, when I leave you. Engineering and the open road for me! I am hat in hand to women; on the doorstep, much obliged, could not possibly accept! Good-bye!"

"There are women and women," Reverdy deliberated.

"Not in Society with a big S. There are homely

women, and rotten and green peaches. And men know it. Women have not any character where a man is up for the stake. They will do anything. It is getting worse and worse. It is an every day stunt to swop wives,—legally, I grant you, and if a chap intends and prefers to run straight, he is the one they will trip up if you give 'em half a chance — though I am but a boy and homely as red hair can make me, I could tell you things — and I am not wealthy, either, to draw 'em on. I am enough of a sport to play up, while I stay,—but as I said, I am going.”

“Orren, my dear old ‘Sorrel-top Orren,’ what sort of a world have you been living in!” expostulated Reverdy, really hurt by the tone of this diatribe.

“A world of no clothes for women! Man is in peril, I tell you. So is America, in a day when every self-respecting man needs a big sister to protect him. It is a world in comparison with which Greece and Rome are going to look like Sunday school. There is going to be a fierce fall of this great Republic, and it is the women who will bring it down. Look at 'em! Playing bridge all day, or dancing in cabarets,—the decent ones, too. The under-world is not in it with the women of society! If they don't go the whole figure, they do the demi-length, plus; dressing as no white slave would find to her own advantage.”

"Don't, Orren! Please don't." Reverdy's voice showed the disapproval he was feeling.

"I know what I am talking about. I have been in the city the last four years, and it is work in the open for Orren Kerr, after this! Women are too easy; and what to do with 'em after you get 'em? Easy enough to get; too hard and expensive to keep." His face grew old and keen, despite the soft firelight mellowing every object it fell upon.

"Don't you ever dream of settling down?"

"I suppose I shall keep chasing myself till I catch my tail some day,— every person does,— and let go again for sheer boredom."

Reverdy shook his head. "You really are an astonishingly straight youngster," he commended. "I have about made up my mind to prove my confidence in you in an unusual way. Your youth may help you to see straighter, or deeper than I can below the surface."

"If I could be of the slightest use to you —" Orren began with eagerness.

"But not unless you are sure you want to trust me"— noting Reverdy's hesitation.

"Perhaps it is not much. I hope it is not anything. But you went to my sister Pauline's more or less, did you not?"

"She was awfully kind to me. Asked me to dinner a lot; took pains to put me by a pretty girl. I met no end of 'Highbrows' there — men a young

fellow like me is glad to mention knowing, afterward, you understand."

The older man smiled. "Paula always did like swells."

"She has 'em; all sorts. Nobody has more. Her husband gets them and she keeps them in her collection. She collects men and traits. She does not try to make 'em or unmake 'em. She observes and notes. She is not a critic, even; she simply collects as others do old china or ivories or rare books. She can tell the real from the spurious as well as I separate goats and sheep. In her way, and mind you, it's a very special way, she is clever enough to be your sister. She is a man's woman, but women have not found it out."

"What do you know of Ferdinand?"

"I know his cigars better."

"Do you like him?"

"They are the choicest brand."

"But he is a good husband? You think they are happy, do you not? He is older than Paula and I never felt quite as I wanted to about her marriage. Then Judith's visit confirmed an impression of imperfect companionship. It is not that I suspect any real danger for either of them. I simply have an unsatisfied feeling that perhaps Paula has missed the keenest happiness,—the happiness that is sharp like pain," he added to himself.

"She has it, all right, but it is not in the legiti-

mate," Orren said. He glanced quickly at Rev-
erdy's face. "See here, I don't want to talk to you
about your sister, you know. If you ask me to
repeat what is going on, I will. But I loathe it.
And what's the use, anyway? Things may be all
right on the inside, and you can count on her to
keep the outside shining."

"Then the chances are that it is not all right,"
her brother said slowly. "I think you had better
tell me and leave me to do the best I can for my
sister. She is rather vain and very young, but she
is true at heart, and I can put her on her guard a
bit, if I know my ground. She was married at
eighteen. It ought not to have been allowed. I
regret it for many reasons, but Paula was never
reasonable, like Judith."

"There is no harm in her. She is perfectly
charming. She has got the New England conscience
and that is tragedy enough for any little woman in
her surroundings."

"And this Pennell?"

"Well, all it is about Reggy Pennell is simple
enough. Seen from the grandstand, it amounts to
this: he has to live and he has to have money. So
he makes himself useful to Ferdinand Braddish.
He could make fifty a day at any club, playing any-
thing. He does help out that way with bridge,
sometimes, not as a regular thing, by any means.
He is a good sort,— on the square. He is well born,

and it has never occurred to him to work. I don't know what he would do with the thought if it came to him. It never will originate with him. You see lots of those chaps out in California, where he came from. I was out there a year and I noted the type. Braddish is a club man; another type. He goes down town at exactly eleven, looks in at a bank or a meeting or two. He takes lunch, a light one, and then has himself motored somewhere till it is time to settle down to bridge. He gets home in time for dinner, and after that settles down to his wine. He likes to go to bed early, well preserved in continuous cocktails and whiskey, and then Reg goes to parties and the play with his wife. There is no harm in it now, people say —"

"But how long will it last?"

"Well, in my opinion, it has not lasted. But that is only my opinion."

A slight noise made them both start, but there was no one there. Judith had, in fact, slipped away a moment before unheeded. Reverdy spoke first.

"For a moment I feared Judith was there. What a careless sin if she had been!" he exclaimed.

"I should have bitten my tongue out," cried Oren, "but I believe she left before you began on Braddish. I don't remember seeing her since that topic came up."

"She has no idea of the evil possible between men and women. I dread the hour when it breaks

over her. She is like the flowers — I would die to keep her

‘so fair, so pure alway—’

But hers is a spirit of fire and the sword also.”

“She is unusual,” said Orren curtly. “It is too bad she has got to grow up.”

“I keep her here because I am a coward,” the other said softly. “I ought to let Pauline take her again. You see why I delay?”

“It won’t hurt her. Dawn travels the slums and never soils her skirts. It will be the same with Judy. Though I am impudent to advise, being but a boy who has no knowledge of her sex.”

“But if this other affair has gone so far as to be openly talked about—”

“I will tell you a little story that will show you exactly where it is,” Orren interrupted. “A chap I know met your sister and Braddish and Pennell crossing last summer, and he said to me— ‘What a devoted couple the Braddishes are! Quite refreshing. They never left each other all the voyage,—put me in mind of the faithful guinea hen. They had another man along with them, but he never got an inning. No “*maison à trois*” for them. Afterward, I found the other chap was the husband all along. Bully one on me—I mixed ’em up. When I was introduced I called him Braddish, of course, and by hookey! he was Pennell!’ ”

Reverdy was walking back and forth at the end.

"They can't go on this way," he said.

"Most everybody else does," Orren encouraged him.

"Just what do you mean?"

"I mean it's bound to come. That will o' the wisp love women are eternally chasing. A woman gets it from some man and passes it along. It is the curse of the first unemployed pair in Eden. If there had been snow to shovel there, Adam would not have taken charity from the serpent. You can see the system working out still. Woman was the first fall of man and she will be the last!" he affirmed savagely.

"Orren, I almost suspect you of being in love," was his friend's unexpected remark.

"I could not talk worse if I had been jilted, you mean? Well, I have not. And I am not going to be. I have no use for the sex. None whatsoever! And it is not from any personal bias, spleen or spite. I just can't abide 'em, and I never could. They have no place in a man's world, and that is where I live and intend to live."

"I wish there might be a place for Judith in it. Her future worries me more than is right. I am accustomed to being able to trust God,—but for her—"

"Perhaps it will have," began Orren, paling per-

ceptibly. "And probably it won't," he ended testily.

"She has an instinctive shrinking from men. There is something a bit Vestal about her, more than maiden," Reverdy said slowly. "She will demand a man strong and white as herself,—and where to find him?"

"It won't work out that way," Orren insisted. "She will fall in love, all over in, with a weak chap, principle no object, or something absolutely unworthy of her. It is always like that. You watch now!"

"God forbid! And may you prove a bitter boy and not a clairvoyant man!" sighed Reverdy.

"I am nothing. I don't come in to it at all. But I have watched life a little, and though but a boy, and a homely one, as I said before, with red hair,— I see which way the cat is running oftener than most men who are after her. You see that reaction in a great many New England girls. They are fiercely modest and frigidly reserved, but let them once feel a passion and they are the same stuff of which the great courtesan is made,—the kind that upset dynasties and recall kings from exile. They go further and faster than any less remarkable and more comprehensible feminine material. They hold their power back until it breaks and carries everything away at once. The New England con-

science makes nuns and Messalinas with astounding impartiality. The chap who wrote this knew,—listen,

“ They call you cold New England,
But underneath your snow
Is blood as red as roses
That in your gardens grow ! ”

“ It is certainly a novel theory.” Reverdy was startled at the boy’s insight.

“ There is no volcano like a New England girl. That same poem goes on through the heart of the matter till it comes to the last verse with —

“ They call you cold New England
But underneath your snow
Is drift not of ice but of ashes.
To guard the flames below.”

“ And with only Pauline for her mainstay ! ” Reverdy’s voice betrayed him. It was near a groan.

“ No, there you are wrong,” corrected Orren. “ Judith herself for mainstay forever ! No one will divert her or guide her or stop her, but herself, whatever course she chooses.”

“ Except God,” Reverdy said softly.

“ Oh, He is on her side.”

“ And if He be for her, who can be against her ? ” Reverdy raised his deep eyes reverently as he said it, and they rose and left the room without another word, just as the clock struck one.

CHAPTER IV

GROWING UP

“**Y**OU have been chasing the black butterflies all night. What is it?” Reggy Pennell asked.

“The same old bother. Only Reverdy more than insists this time; he takes for granted,” complained Pauline. They had come home from the opera and stood facing each other in front of the last of the library fire, with a glass of wine untouched before each of them on the mantel, and some sandwiches forgotten on the table.

“He has not objected to your school scheme, has he?”

“No, but he dictates Sundays here; every Sunday. Then there will be holidays too.” The regret in her voice was obtrusive.

“She is your sister,” he reminded her.

“I shall do my duty,” she said curtly.

“You are capable of it, if there is nothing else to do.”

“Nothing will ever be the same,” she sighed.

"Things never are," he agreed, failing in tact for once.

"She is bound to throw everything out of perspective and make everybody uncomfortable," Paula continued. "She will complicate matters at every turn. She has lived up there with Reverdy, allowed to read and know everything, and what is worse talk about it. She has the most impenetrable reserve and the most abominable frankness I ever knew. Sometimes she seems like a pure Pagan and then she turns blue as a Puritan."

"She will be on her own game, from the first," Reggy went on, still untactfully. "You will see how little you will come in. She has a heady sort of beauty —"

But Pauline cut him short with, "Her looks are too old for her and way beyond her. It is a handicap for a mere child to look as she does. People will think her older than she is and judge her accordingly."

"Men won't judge her at all, they will be too busy doing something else to her!"

Pauline veered from that aspect of it. "I think Rev is nervous as an old woman about her future — She can take care of herself. He need not be so apprehensive. He never worried about me!" Pauline said, aggrieved over it now for the first time.

Their silence was not sympathetic. Pennell broke

it by saying, "She walks like a tragedy queen."

"I do detest the unconventional!" cried pretty Pauline. "If Judy says nothing and does not move, you know she is there and so does everybody else. She fails utterly to compose with the picture. She is out of drawing and it is convincingly noticeable."

"Don't worry. To-morrow is another day!" he said easily, raising his glass to her as he spoke. The wine was one of Ferdinand Braddish's best brands. Pennell was glad he could appreciate its fine quality. It would have been a pity for Paula's emotions to be thrown after some fellow less versed in vintage and therefore less responsive. He felt it a virtue in him to be so aware of Ferdinand's good points. It squared things between them a good deal.

Pauline drank her wine without meeting his glance. She did not say what she thought, which was that no man is so optimistic about anything that matters vitally to him. Reggy Pennell, too, like all men, preferred no innovations. But he remembered in spite of her aggressive nature, that Judith was a woman child. There was nothing bad in him, but to men of the Pennell stamp every woman is a possible adventure. Moreover Paula was playing over tunes he knew, and variety is the heart-beat of a man. Reverdy being head of the family, however Pauline might rebel, there was no other way out of it. Reverdy wanted to be in Europe for a time. There were ecumenical inter-

ests to be served by his going. Judith had passed her sixteenth birthday. The experiment could not be put off longer. Reverdy felt that a woman's touch was becoming important, if not necessary. The care and comprehension he sought for their little sister were, alas! the very things Pauline least wanted to give. It was not easy to hold Pennell just where he was, even with the aid of the Brad-dish luxury. Other women had practically the same unlimited assets and the charm of novelty beside. Pauline had lost her brightest weapon in letting him see that she cared. The situation could be counted on as it was. But the equilibrium was too precarious to risk such unbalancing as this child was threatening with her eyes of starry midnight and her impossible unexpectedness.

The arrival of Judith was luckless from the start, for Pauline was keeping an engagement she could not break and Ferdinand was uninformed of her coming. Martin missed her at the station, from her having ridden in the baggage car with her dog, where it never occurred to him to search for her.

Her first bewildered sense of disappointment was cut short by Patmos, who, set free of the train, veered with a nervous energy unbelievable in so small a dog and nearly drew her under the out-going train on the adjoining track. Like a brown demon he tugged at his leash, then sprang into the air in curving leaps pretending to catch the hand that held

him, then making dashes at the heels of strangers; his eyes wild with excitement and his stiff little body iron from under-fed nerve and muscle. Many eyes were turned upon the girl and her handsome dog, while with the instinct of a lady shrinking from making herself conspicuous in public, she did her best to calm the beloved brute and not mind the obviously dreary situation. Her remonstrance, in a voice vibrant but sweet in spite of its young shrillness, only attracted more attention. Her face flushed with annoyance as the dog darted like a trout on the hook, with savage little jerks one way and another, wound a stuffy old gentleman's feet in his toils, and being extricated settled down to a hard steady tugging at the leash. By chance she ran across a good-hearted cab driver and their progress up the avenue began, with Patmos barking his life out, his two white paws clawing the front-board of the taxi, his eyes staring from their sockets, his whole brindle body one tremor of delirium.

Reggy Pennell, walking sedately in the direction of the Braddish mansion, was startled to hear a voice calling his name. "The lady deceives herself," was his instant conviction but a glad gay young voice, undrained by fictitious emotions, cried after him:

"Oh, Mr. Pennell! Help me hold Pat! Do get into the taxi! How do you do? I am Judith, you remember. Pauline Braddish's sister from the

country. What is the matter? No one met me. No one is ill, I hope?"

"*Chic* as ever," he said, getting into the storm centre with some misgiving and taking her hand in his left one, the right being occupied with the dog. He forgot to relinquish it for so long that she began to wonder if he supposed she was also meditating a flying leap over the wheels, too.

"I shan't jump out," she told him, drawing it away — and laughing to cover her confusion.

"Well, I am not so sure. I never caught a nymph and satyr on the Avenue before, and having no experience to guide me, I cannot rely on precedent," he assured her.

She looked into the Park inquisitively.

"I wonder if you are going to like it any better than you did before," he ventured, noting her profile and the poise of her head.

"I was thinking of Pat. He will hate being on the leash so!" she sighed, and the eyes she turned toward him were dazzling through tears unshed. "He is named Patmos from his way of seeing things that are not there. He was always visionary. He makes himself believe he sees a cat, and then chases her in the dusk till he is a mere string. He has of the imagination! as the French say."

"And of the determination, as well," Pennell added, clutching the leash. "We will take him off

in the country for a run, now and then," he promised, and was taken off his feet by the radiance that rewarded him.

"Can we, truly? Would Paula let me?" she asked.

"If not, we will just break the leash and run away!" He looked as if he liked the idea quite as well.

"No, I could not unless I was allowed," she said soberly.

"Well, we will arrange some sort of compromise," he declared glibly.

"If Pauline approves, you mean," she said, and he saw that compromise, that dearest of all male resources, was foreign to her. He felt unaccountably depressed. Without compromise where were his chances with Judith at all? Probably she was a prig, as Pauline had said; but all the more sport to upset her little notions. Reggy Pennell belonged to a seasoned type of men who care less to have a woman perfectly his ideal than imperfectly fascinating. The finished product was to him as ready-made apparel to the fastidious woman,—unindividual and for the taste of the crude lower millions. Individual divergence was his line in women.

"On the whole, how does it go?" he asked her a month later, the first time he actually found an opportunity to speak with her alone.

"I like church and dancing school," she replied unhesitatingly.

"Nothing else?"

"No."

"What else have you tried?"

She enumerated her routine. He listened without enthusiasm greater than her own.

"Don't you like the theatre?"

"I have not been there. And I have only been three times in my life, so I am not sure," she replied.

"What plays have you seen?"

"'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' 'Othello' and 'Everyman.'"

"Well, that's a game selection! Let's go right away. You may like it as well as church."

"Paula has so many engagements, you see," she explained, "and I am always here on Saturdays, when the girls at school are taken to the play with a teacher."

"So that is how it happens. Well, to-day is Saturday, and we will go to-night. You can sleep over to-morrow to make up."

Pauline, coming in at this point, was the only one bored by the proposition.

"What is there she can see?" she remonstrated.

"Not a single play running Reverdy would care to include in her precious education! They are all

rotten, every one. You know it, Reg, perfectly. You have seen them all."

"Oh, Paula! You go all the time! They are not all rotten or you would not want to see them!" cried poor Judith.

"What is the matter with the 'Music Master'?" Reggy asked.

"That old thing?" cried Pauline. "Nothing,—that is just what is the matter with it. I forgot that. But what a bore! I will send Judith with one of the girls and a teacher, if she wants to hear it. There is no point in our being sacrificed and giving up a whole evening."

Judith's face had become proud and hard. She found no fault with the arrangement.

"But if I want the pleasure?" Reggie began, hating to see the child's humiliation.

"Nonsense, Reg! You must not try to turn her head," said Pauline shortly, and there it dropped.

But Fate played into Judith's empty hand, for Orren Kerr blew in at tea time. "Fresh from Arizona with cactus in my hair!" according to his own version, and finding no one at home for tea, demanded Miss Judith and got her. She came flying down to him with Patmos reeling about her, too glad to see Reverdy's friend for manners or convention. They clung to each other's hands, chattering, and let the dog wobble between them,

as if the stately drawing-room had been the Rectory up on the hillside.

"I came partly because Reverdy worries about you. How do you like it?" Orren asked bluntly.

"Not terribly. Pretty well," she said.

"What is the school like?"

"It is rather silly."

"And the girls?"

"I am afraid of them."

"You, afraid of anything!" he jeered.

"They make me shut up in myself," she went on. "They say things I have not been used to hearing talked about."

"Indecent, I presume."

"Oh, no!"

"I know better. I know them, all kinds. There is nothing so immoral as a young girl of their type. Depraved imagination not balanced by reason; a mess of curiosity and conjecture. It is a shame you have to put up with it."

He wished he knew they had not disillusioned her in regard to her sister.

"They are wonderful to look at," she glowed generously.

"The handsome ones are the worst,—that is, generally speaking," he amended, staring straight at her.

"I never dreamed how beautiful a girl could be till I was sent there," she said simply.

"You have never looked in your own glass, then," he jerked out, in his curt way.

"Why, Orren Kerr, I do believe you flatter, when you come to town, too! How funny!" She was laughing now.

"Oh, damn flattery!" he cried,—then enter Reggy Pennell.

"I was sent for because Sister is out," Judith said, to account for the situation. Reggy tried to look surprised. He accomplished it not so badly, considering that he had left that same lady in a black temper a short time since, having pressed his invitation to Judith far beyond her liking.

The men shook hands heartily. Suddenly they felt that each was after all a good chap.

"Here for long?" Reggie asked.

"To-night."

"That all?"

"That depends."

"Too bad you are disappointed,—not seeing Mrs. Braddish."

"I don't know as I am, yet. I wanted to take Judy to the 'Music Master.' I got a box by wire. If Pauline is not here, we can take along some one else. You would not come, would you?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, but I would not be allowed," protested Judith. "We discussed it before to-day."

"Allowed, your Grandmother!" said Orren

roughly. "I told Reverdy I was going to take you, and I am. It is nothing to us if nobody else goes. I will step down and tell Mr. Braddish. He is sure to be at the Club at this hour. If he says so, it goes; since Mrs. Braddish is not here. And I infer she is not due till bed-time."

"You will catch it!" was Pennell's silent comment. He envied the independence of Orren's bravado. What would he care if he did catch it? There were no strings on his freedom.

Ferdinand was honestly glad to have Judith get a little fun. "Go ahead," was his advice. "If Paula wants to chaperone, let her stay by and attend to it. If I were Judith, I would have bolted this sawdust ring long ago. Tell her that I will make it all right with Paula."

All the way to the theatre Judith was calm with suppressed excitement. Both men stared at her, when she was not aware of it, and both did their best to be amusing. Once there and the play begun, they ceased to exist for her. Many a jaded heart envied the brilliant child her absorption, the supreme illusion created for her by the performance. They had come to the scene where the music-master's piano is to be taken from him for debt,—the house was moved, there were tears on faces unused to such "spring floods," when, at just the cruel moment, a sweet shrill young voice startled the stage and orchestra alike.

“Stop! Wait,—I will pay!” rang out over the astonished spectators, and Judith, who had risen and stood at the front of the box, oblivious of all save the old musician’s troubles, suddenly became aware of what she had done. Some one laughed. That broke the tension.

Pennell and Orren Kerr exchanged glances that pledged the child forever, without a word spoken.

“Brava!” cried a man in the opposite box,—a certain Heminway, much in the public eye. But her confusion was so pitiful that they slurred over the incident as deftly as possible.

“What would Paula say?” was Judith’s own worst misgiving.

They decided Paula need not be given details, the outline would be sufficient.

Pauline did not say a great deal to any of the three culprits, or to Ferdinand, the arch traitor; but she changed her tactics, from that time on. Often when Reggy enquired after her sister with polite concern, Pauline replied that she was in the country with the Ormsbys, for the week end, or had gone with other schoolmates to this or that theatre. And as he rarely dined at the Braddish table unless there was a party, and as Judith never appeared when there was, she was made to fade rather forcibly out of his landscape; as artists express it, “made to lose herself from the foreground”; her unconscious revenge being to appear

in his mental background as a face he did not easily forget, and a haunting quality that as a mere child, during her first experiment with Pauline, had set her apart from all other little girls of his acquaintance.

Meantime, Judith was meeting life on new terms and in unexpected quarters.

Young Peter Ormsby, meeting Pauline at a dinner not long after, fell to asking about her sister. Why this should disquiet Pauline, it is difficult to make clear to those who do not get it at first blush. This intense predominance of Judith seemed to menace her, Pauline, with coming abdication. Was it to be that men wanted to sit by her to talk of another woman, and that woman a child? It was far worse than if Judith was her own daughter, since a daughter could be merely hinted at, as behind the Arras, for years and years, but a sister only a little younger, and so perversely pronounced, was a trial grievous to a reigning heart.

"You will have your life full, now," Peter Ormsby was saying, as if it needed such a diversion! "Miss Judith has a genius for getting herself remarked. She could make her fortune on the stage; not only from her natural charm but her gift for advertisement."

"What a horrid thing to say of a little school-girl!" Pauline rebuked him.

"But she is such a frightfully unusual looking little girl — she can have me; tell her so,— I always get up to it, when she is with my sisters, and something stops me."

"You do think she is attractive?" Paula lowered her lashes.

"She is your sister," he played up tritely.

"She really is a good child. She is ignorant of conventions from her life in the country, but she is not intentionally loud or headstrong,— not in the least."

"Has any one told you of her escapade at the Saint Stelvio, yesterday?"

Pauline flushed. Instantly she recalled the day and evening. It could be nothing involving Reggy. He was with her. She was herself as she smiled at him, in readiness to be diverted.

"What do you refer to?"

"Didn't Miss Judith tell you?"

"I have not seen her,— that is, she was out and then I was out, and then —" She floundered a little, noticing his expression from which admiration for her charming self had waned.

"This was it. My sister Catherine had a birthday — and being young, celebrated, as no doubt we used to do," he bowed, aggravatingly. "My father went with a few friends to the theatre and afterward, as a great spree, took them to the Saint Stelvio for something to eat. The place was full.

A stupid fool of a man at the table next, gave his order, then blustered for wine. He got it, drank some, spilled more, talked in a disgusting way to the woman with him,— and when his waiter brought the supper, declared it was not his order; demanded the *maitre d'hôtel*, and complained; wanted the waiter discharged at once,—made a beastly row generally, then got up and walked off, leaving a disordered table and an unpaid check. Miss Judith spoke civilly to their waiter, who it seemed had served her before there, with you, and he told her it was a shame, for the fellow had a sick wife and needed his job. To be sent off without a recommendation meant desperate things.

“That was enough for your sister. She sent for the *maitre d'hôtel*, and on her own told him the truth. ‘It was a shame to send off your waiter. It was not his fault; the man was drinking. He was not a gentleman or an honest man!’ she insisted.

“In the end she had her way. The poor fellow was kept on, and was so overcome he retired to the pantry and wept and prayed. When our party went out, every waiter in the place was lined up at the door and the benefactress went between them, like the body of a statesman at his own funeral,—dignified as a corpse but pleased as Punch.”

“Did it annoy your father too dreadfully?”
Pauline was scandalised.

“The Governor liked it. The fact is he is a socialist at heart, for all his millions. He never would have butted in or let one of his own girls, but he was taken by the dash of it in Miss Judith. ‘She ought to have control of big interests,’ he said afterward. ‘She has the people’s point of view instinctively. It is essential to capital as well as to progress. She sees over into the world of the other half, and in America we have got to reckon with them or be wiped out ourselves.’ Watch that child! She is going to be Somebody.”

“I intend to watch her, and she is going to be Mrs. Peter Ormsby, Jr., if she can be brought to state her conditions. No matter what they are,— I told him. And I hereby formally offer you my hand and heart, Mrs. Braddish, in her behalf.”

“How utterly absurd!” cried Pauline. “Judy is not out of the nursery”—then with a gasp of comprehension of this possible solution of the problem, at an earlier date than she had ever let herself hover about, in her wildest imagination—she amended—“At least, for the present, I do hope you will not say anything to her. It would frighten her. And of course I could wish for nothing more delightful than that you were really in earnest.” Thereby keeping her bridges well in repair, in case she found it practicable to march Judith over them into the enemy’s country.

CHAPTER V

RUNNING AWAY

FOR a week Reggy Pennell had a certain little dialog with Judith running in his head. "I hate dancing with boys—I like it alone, terribly; it lets me out so"—she had told him. "I get the Abt Vogler feeling perfectly,—

"All through music and me,

Don't you?"

"I am not so sure that I do. What is an Abt Vogler feeling?" he asked, to be sure.

"Why, just that," she explained lucidly. "It is almost more wonderful than riding, because it is all your own, and it is better than even dreaming in some ways, because you are not apt to wake up. At least, you don't have to until the music stops."

"I say, Miss Judith, give me the first dance at anything you may ever happen to go to in society, will you? I should like to get that feeling. I am sure you are the only person who could show it to me."

"But how could you with me? You could not. You have to dance alone."

"Well, I might catch it from you. Perhaps it is contagious."

"I see your idea," she pondered it, "but you are too old to catch things."

"Yes, I was sure you would see," he protested, "and I am not really too old to catch several things. I have never had bubonic plague, and there is one malady of the most serious sort that I have only had so lightly it will probably be my finish if I am exposed to it again." As far as he could tell the insinuation made no impression on her.

"Can you dance?" she asked, more honestly than he liked.

"Try me."

She considered him, gravely.

"Let me show you once how it feels to dance with your eyes shut," he suggested.

"Could we?"

"Of course. But when shall we ever get the chance?"

"That would be real dreaming," she sighed. And something in the man made him change the subject abruptly. After all, why sophisticate this glorious infant? He could not keep her out of his mind. He wanted to take her off for an afternoon in the country. He was sure Pauline would do nothing to help bring it about. After all, even

if he did want to, why should he take her? And equally, why should he not take her, anyway? Where was the harm? He would have to lie to Judith and explain to Pauline afterward. She would have excuse for a scene. But she adored scenes. They had had a good many of late. Why should he not get a little fun to pay for one of them?

He picked up Patmos as a credential, thanks to the connivance of Martin, and presented himself at Judith's school one Saturday at precisely the end of the hour, quite dishevelling the last few sentences of the German class. One girl saw the taxi draw up; another commanded a view of handsome shoulders clad in the lightest of French grey and a violet boutonnière visible only to the front row. The vicissitudes of "Hermann and Dorothea" sank to their proper peasant level by such vivid comparison. When he had got up the steps, there remained for the fortunate eyes at the end seats nearer the window, a pair of white spats, and for those further along a glimpse of his hair as he lifted his hat to a passing acquaintance in the street.

How it was all brought about Judith had no idea. Undoubtedly Pennell had a knack with women, all sorts and shades of women, and the terrible headmistress was not only pacified but charmed, so that Judith found herself in the cab and off, with Patmos

a raving maniac of delight, before she realised that Pauline was not actually in the party.

"Where is Paula? I thought you said she was waiting for us?" she enquired, when the dog left her the power of speech.

"Oh, she will probably meet us at the Ferry house," he assured her. "We could not expect her to give us an extra half hour of her crowded day."

"You are sure?" For an instant she lifted those eyes to his own.

"Oh, quite!"

She sighed as if the ache of long tension had broken. "It would break Pat's heart to go back now," she said.

"Poor old chap! How does he like his education?"

"It is really a finishing school for him. I worry about him all the time. It was selfish of me to bring him. He is tearing after birds this minute in his fur soul." She hugged the brown head as she spoke.

"You two are awfully devoted." He could not help watching her hand, now on his bridle head, now under his velvet throat, calming him, coaxing him to be decently quiet. "Faithful in fur things, you shall be a ruler of men," he misquoted, to divert her.

Her laugh was spontaneous, but she frowned at him instantly. "A few things,—and a ruler of many, not men," she corrected. "Did you never go to Sunday school or Bible class?"

"Certainly I did. Only think how well I must know the scripture to misquote so aptly."

"I do not care for your kind of familiarity, if it breeds contempt," she said. It would have struck him as rude in a woman, pert in another child. In her, it was simply her thought expressed.

"You mean men should not treat the Bible as if it were their own wives?" he asked, to see how she would take it.

"But what other wives can they treat?" she returned sharply, to his surprise.

"Well, they must not covet their neighbour's, even to abuse—" he began, then realised it was not in good taste, and added quickly, "But why should we talk about the ten commandments on a lovely day like this? They are too hopelessly bourgeois to come in, anyway."

"They don't exist at all until you want to break them," she argued keenly.

She had said until. Might she, too, want to break one, some far day? It stimulated him to think so. If she was Puritan, so was witchcraft.

They reached the ferry as the gong made a din to warn of departure.

"Hurry!" he cried. "I will get the tickets. You

go ahead." In the swirl of Patmos and the turnstile and the crowd, they were on and in motion before either remembered Pauline.

"You said she would be there," Judith challenged. The sea tang had already got into her blood and set her all a-sparkle. Pennell thought he had never seen such an embodiment of sheer life and glory.

"It is all my fault. I forgot to look," he apologised. "That gong always makes me feel as if I was lost if I did not catch that especial boat. I am awfully sorry."

"We ought not to have got on. We ought to have waited for her."

"Oh, dear! It was too careless of me,—but we can take the trip over and go right back. Very likely she is on the other side waiting for us now."

But Paula was not waiting for them, though they looked everywhere for her. Nor did she come on the next boat, though they waited hungry and disappointed on the glaring ferry shed, where everybody else met somebody, and hurried, talking, away.

Patmos quivered on the leash till he had to give way and howl once. Judith was flushed and tired. Pennell then took control of the situation with his old masterful charm.

"If Pauline has shipped us for something she likes better, why should we give it all up? Come on and let's have fun, just the same," he proposed

gaily. "I can telephone her if you like. We will take this train just going, and run down to a strip of beach I know, and let Pat run and have a real picnic."

Her clear eyes questioned him, but he met them with the stare of a great-aunt mending stockings on a Saturday afternoon.

"Grand!" she cried. "If you are sure I can." And again they were united and full of business over their luncheon. A cold chicken, fruit and sweet chocolate were the most easily possible.

"I do hope Paula won't mind," Judith began then. "I am sure she need not grudge Patmos and me one little half-holiday." And ended by forgetting all about past or future. Joy was her natural element. Everything else fell back. One felt one could trust her to choose only a high form of that commodity, but once possessed of it she would never regret or calculate the cost.

The station where they left the train was insignificant and deserted. Away to the left clustered a row of houses, a sort of all-the-year-round settlement, on a badly kept street. By a few minutes' walking in the opposite direction they got into some fields leading down to the shore of the Sound. As far as the eye could reach it stretched lonely and unbroken, till it disappeared round a bend in the coast. Judith bent down and Patmos, half

strangled from tugging, was off the leash and a mere flat line of brindle in the distance.

“‘Taste your legs!’—as Sir Toby invites. Look at him! He has not had a chance for weeks, poor Lamb-doggy.”

“That is queer biology,” Pennell put in.

“It is not half so queer as that all angels are men.”

“Never mind discussion if he is happy; let’s sit right down and have our spread,” he urged. But the Mermen seemed to be calling Judith. She did not hear him. She had forgotten hunger for the “humped and fishy sea” before her.

Pennell said to himself that she might be painted in that pose, as Loti’s Iceland fishermaid watching for her lover, or a Greek girl waiting the return of Menelaus, or—how the deuce she did jumble up the classics in a man’s head! He selected a spot where some driftwood happened to be heaped close above high-water mark and there they did at last settle themselves and spread out their luncheon on the hard clean sand. The sun was just entering a white cloud, shaped like a chariot fleeing. They ate unmercifully and merely food for food’s sake without the art of conversation or any attempt to charm each other. Pennell imagined the jaded make-believe an older woman would have felt bound to give him under like circumstances and applauded

the present method as brutally natural and good. She was the hungrier of the two, and indiscriminatingly,— eating sandwiches, tough chicken and sweet chocolate, while the sea, all the while, ran up and down and called and flung up all sorts of stuff at them.

“When I was young,” said Judith, “I used to hear Reverdy read ‘the sea and all that in them is—’ and till I was quite old I thought it was the sea and all that’s in the Miz. I used to wonder what the Miz was till Pauline said it was my bureau drawer.”

“It knows you are here. It is throwing up its hat like anything,” Pennell remarked.

“It is glad. It is glad,” she chanted at him.

“You like it more than the hills?” He really wanted her answer.

“I do now. Some day I shall love the hills best, as Reverdy does. Reverdy says,

“Unto my youth the sea calls follow!
Unto my heart the hills call bide—

He went back to them when he was broken-hearted, you know, and I want to.”

“To go back to them broken-hearted?”

“I want the sea first.”

“The sea is cruel. It wrecks and drowns. Why not go before it reaches you?”

“I want it first,” she persisted.

"What else do you want, first?"

"I want some of everything."

"Everything?"

"If it is not wrong."

He talked to her strangely perhaps. He led her to talk in a way that made him, the man of the world, feel something stir within. The sensation of being at the mercy of real emotions is a rare one for the Pennells of this world. He felt in Judith to-day a significance — a something just ready to break through — like love before it speaks or knows, spring before the birds or opening buds; Reverdy would have phrased it as faith without sight of God.

Suddenly he resented his relation with Pauline Braddish. He was unjust to her, of course. What man is not when he ceases to care? What she took from him was false, an imitation of the real thing. She knew his sensuous nature. If what she gave him was not false, so much the worse for them both. And he knew that he wanted now to do nothing so much in all his life as to deepen this exquisite significance. To make this cold child with her strange sea-soul, aloof, yet with passion dreaming in her every nerve, blush into womanhood, trust her high beauty to him for its unfolding. To him? Good God, was it likely? What a sick, blind ass he had been to himself! She was Paula's sister. By that fact he was disqualified.

This, he must always remember. This, he must never let himself forget.

Then, Patmos, scenting bones, landed in the midst of things, scattering lunch and revery alike. Judith dragged him out, four feet stiffly planted, and made a dog-heaven for him at a respectable distance.

"You look just as Reverdy does when one of his parishioners has been beating his wife; what are you thinking about?" she demanded untactfully.

"I have not been beating my wife," he assured her. "What would you do if that sort of thing happened to you, Most Royal of Highnesses?"

"Me? I am never going to marry, so it cannot." She got up and gave a little stretch of animal energy renewed. "Come on, let's run!" she proposed.

"Oh, not right after lunch. I am smoking still. Let us talk," he urged.

"But we have talked," she coaxed.

"All right. You run and I will time you." This she declined, but soon gave way to the invitation of the distance and was off with Patmos, blowing, curving, dancing along the shore, then running wild as Pennell had never dreamed a human being could run, till — just how this happened he never could explain — a light mist closed in low over the water, a melancholy fog-bell riding further out droned;

there rose and fell the lonely bellowing of a fog horn, and the girl and dog were out of his range of vision.

After their first spurt Pat had been a mere idler; stopping to acquaint himself with an occasional queer flotsam, then trotting stiffly, head and tail in air, but never looking back or responding to his mistress' voice. Suddenly he saw in the distance a veritable yellow cur, and began to tiptoe with excitement. When he crouched for a spring, she all but came up with him. But he trotted on preoccupied with his own idea of some imaginary destination. She whistled sharply like a boy and he wheeled, stood for a moment, reassuringly, and went on, always faster, in the direction of the town. She followed, gaining on him, until an untimely cat backed down a shabby tree directly in his path. This finished it. She was left gazing after a streak of brindle and maltese. The cat tried dodging once or she would have lost them completely. Down the dirty street they flew, disappearing in the area of a cheap looking hotel with coarse lace curtains in the windows and a barber shop at the rear. And after them went Judith. She plunged into the difficulties of readjustment by a clear-cut vituperation of the cat, which had attacked an innocent, defenceless dog, and left him with a hall-mark that would humiliate him for weeks. The cat being shut up, she leashed Patmos and turned to go, when at the

doorstep it occurred to her that she did not know how she came. Across the street there seemed to be the rear of a much larger hotel or casino or some sort of public place, where people were eating at little tables to the din of a couple of strident violins.

At this point all other sensations deserted her, for the shoulders filling the open window nearest opposite were those of her brother-in-law. Beside him sat a lady she did not know, some one young and striking, who laughed all the time. If he were to see her there what would he think? And how could she make the lady not blame Mr. Pennell for letting her lose herself this way?

She would tell Ferdinand the moment she got home, but it might annoy him to see her in such a scrape, with Pat all blood and her hat on crooked after the run. She had better not go over there if there was any other way out of it.

"Here is the little account for the window the dog went through, Miss," a voice began politely, behind her. So she would have to send for Ferd after all. The child was puzzled by her own reluctance, that something held her back. Why should she think Ferdinand would object so much? He never did object to anything. Paula always said so,—said he "never cared."

Yet to Pennell, coming to the rescue opportunely

by a side street, she explained her disinclination as well as she could, by saying —

“I suppose I might have been mistaken, but I did not remember the lady, and I did not like to meet a stranger in such a mess.”

“You were mistaken all round,” he said. “It could not have been Mr. Braddish.” He, too, had plainly seen him and his companion. “It was lucky you did not go over there. It is not half so nice a place as our beach. And if you had come up against a man you did not know he might have been rude to you.”

“That is probably what made me hesitate so. I could not see why I did not want to go over there, but I just did not. And I am sure it was Ferdinand.”

“Oh, no, you were mistaken. And, anyway, we won’t tell, so he won’t! It is only a woman who tells what she does not know.” He laughed, but he thought a good deal on the way home, though he chatted amusingly. He did not speculate as to the latent power of Judith any more that day. He was busy with other less attractive material. The rain began to fall as they reached town, and he was determined no moral grey sky should over-cloud her holiday.

“I will tell Sister, myself,” she said to him the last thing. He read her instinct to protect him in

her valiant defiance. But it was not of Paula he had been thinking. What had Ferdinand Braddish been doing at a road-house of that class on a May Saturday afternoon? He had but to wait till he should be told. Undoubtedly it would come up, after Judith's escapade was known. He would wait and see. It was none of his affair, anyway. Only it was queer. He was glad he had put the child off so easily. What an instinct she had, though,—something told her there was a reason. The hint was enough. Braddish had never left his orbit before, as far as any one knew. He was punctual as a planet. Suppose he thought he might see some other people that he knew down there—was that it? Or had Paula sent him on a wild goose chase after Judith, knowing the beach herself of old? Or was he simply there? Once he should have felt differently about any hitch between the Braddishes, now he should deplore it as the last blow Fate could deal him. What little hope there was for him lay in the permanence of that marriage-tie. If Paula were suddenly to find herself free—if Paula went in for restitution—if she were to use evidence—he declined to pursue the argument.

But Ferdinand never spoke of his adventure out of Club-land into the "Miz," and after a time Reggy forgot it. Or if he remembered it, dismissed it as having no bearing on anything, or as a funny

resemblance. That he did not himself speak of it either proved,— well, what if it did? Had not Pauline given her husband every provocation? And was it for Reggie Pennell, in heaven's name! to wonder at any vagary of Ferdinand Braddish?

Judith being convinced that it was not a resemblance, thought proudly to herself, "Ferd trusts me. For some reason he is keeping his matters secret, and he can count on me. I wish I could make everybody sure of me like that." Strangely enough, Judith felt relieved of a certain anxious responsibility. Degrading as the conclusion was, if Paula was false, it somehow helped it if Ferd was not altogether noble.

CHAPTER VI

"PAPILLON BLEU"

JUDITH'S first dance proved a decisive event. Orren Kerr from afar frankly regarded it as the loosing of the lions upon the Christian maidens of old. Judith herself was queer about it. When questioned she had explained she "was not much for it."

"If there was any one man you especially liked, you would feel differently about it," Paula reiterated.

It was to be a Cinderella, unblown buds only, a Saturday night affair, so Judith was at the Brad-dish's all afternoon, too depressed to read. She sat, book in hand, staring straight before her: sentences from a letter of Julian's passing and re-passing through her mind. Happy Julian! Hunting along great rivers and sleeping out under the stars!

"She looks more like Iphigenia about to be im-molated than a girl anticipating her first real dance," Paula reported at the tea table.

"Do cheer up, Judy! You could not take it

more seriously if you were going to be married!" she cried, when Judith appeared with the maid, for final approval. Her sister drew up her shoulders till they would go no further. "That is the one thing I shall never have to do; not even to please you. Reverdy promised me that long ago."

"Funny child! You will be married before you are twenty."

"Orren says he could not marry without doing a bigger stunt in changing his spots than any leopard ever had put up to him. He expresses it for us both."

Pauline frowned. "Orren Kerr is not a fit friend for a child like you, and Reverdy did wrong to encourage your acquaintance. Every woman is born to her place in society and the home. She owes it to the world," she said sententiously.

"You love it all so, Paula! And I hate it, you know," she moaned. "If it has to be done, I will do it. But it makes me prickle to dance with people, unless I love them: and I suffer if people get very near me. You are different. It does not affect you that way. You cannot understand how it makes me feel."

Pauline Braddish was indeed on alien ground here.

"It is not good taste to expose all you think about society, dear," she began.

"Well, I am not going to even think, to-night.

I am just going to dance and lose myself. The people will not really matter," she promised, with a sudden return of spirits. No wonder her sister felt dubious of the result. She thought a good deal more than was her habit, as she dressed for her own engagements that night. She knew very well that all her own people had a streak of the wild-love growing somewhere underneath the snow. Her brother Reverdy had transfigured his passion. What she had done with hers was no secret. She was glad at least that Judith's dancing was supreme. She was no bungler to languish in partnerless oblivion.

And Judith did dance. Danced so well that her partners all but forgot her in the new discovery of mere motion; not emotion, the usual ballroom counterfeit.

She was wearing white, of course, the conventional blank of purity in which a girl by common consent begins her career of darkness. But her frock revealed her the boy-hearted being she really was. A lithe Greek boy playing with his interminable balls nor noticing how his beauty drew other youth toward him!

Having offered "a subsequent engagement" as excuse to an earlier invitation, Reggy Pennell had slipped in to watch her, finding her unlike any girl he had ever, so far, remembered or forgot. And that covered a good share of their species. Hers

was the grace of a wild thing in flight. It was the freedom of the sky to the wingèd. It was Daphne running for love of it, before Apollo gave chase. Hers was dancing triumphantly independent of the men who danced with her.

They might as well have been dancing in whirling flakes of a snowstorm for all concern she gave them. It was maddening to the male observer, or would have been, if it had not been so delicious. It was more so to do it with her; so much more so that everything else dropped out of consideration. Whether the movement suited a deliberate measure or swept out from restraint, her own body secreted a rhythm perfectly mating the music that led her on and on.

Pennell suddenly lost his head. He had got to dance with her. He had got to make her close those lyric-haunted eyes of hers; close them in his arms, to be made aware by inward consciousness of all that romance, passion, possession, meant between a man and woman. He hesitated. Her Eden was so guileless now. Let her dance on, young, glorious and shining. He looked her way. An older man was approaching her, hungrily being presented. Two youngsters were disputing her next dance. Judith, half turning away, was looking out of an open window as unconcerned as the favourite whose next race is the subject of high betting. Let them make their book as they chose. She should

dance with herself, whoever got it, because she loved it. They did not matter. They really did not come in at all.

Already Pennell was near her. He had heard that senile voice say, "You will give me the next after this, then?" He saw the glance that desecrated her, and heard her clear reply, "I don't care which one of you I dance it with"—her smile so glad and truthful they had to believe her without feeling cut, or missing the familiar flattery of preference. A girl that would neither pout nor flirt was, as Paula had said, "funny,"—but also she could dance! Pennell, overhearing it, was glad, too. He drew off again. Wouldn't it be fun, though, to make her want to dance with some one? It would. If it would,—then why not? The Pennells of this world know nothing of self-denial. It is probably of their class Cardinal Newman wrote "the world always chases the young heart." Reggie Pennell could no more resist it than the hound could help following the fox. Instinct can be shamed and trained out of a man, to be sure, but it first involves the will to be spirit, to which such men are strangers. To find a real new self-indulgence at hand is, for them, a rare blessing dropped at their feet.

When the music began next time he was close to her as she turned back to her still squabbling suitors.

"Come — dance this one with me — it is my favourite tune," he said. He had her moving with him without another word.

It was an experience. He had not deceived himself. He knew how women danced: none like this child. It was life-giving, not enervating. That was his first realisation. It was morning with the dew on. It was the sun. He derided himself for the sentiment.

"Let's be waves now," she hinted, after their first long silence.

"Yes — those great slow ones far out from our beach," he assented, all playfellow, all eager to assure her. They tried several such pretty fancies, then, for he could not hold off from any desired form of pleasure long, how could he, being a Pennell?

"Close your eyes now and drift," he bade her.

She obeyed without a second consideration.

He held ever so slightly closer. "Dream — dream, I will guide you — trust yourself to me, give yourself up to me, only follow the music and motion and me, let nothing else exist for you —"

At first, as if it was merely some fantastic new make-believe, she threw herself into his fancy, as he had in hers, slowly, as if hypnotised she gave herself, as if in an actual dream beyond the power to act or will. The music waned. She opened her eyes. He knew what he had done.

"Did you dream well? Will you tell me your dream?" he whispered. She only gave him an unfathomable glance in reply. The last chord warned. They were still moving with the rest. He held her close to him, murmuring, "Mine was to hold you so forever, Judith, never to wake alone again." As he released her he closed his own eyes for an instant, moved beyond control. The music stopped. Without a word or look she disappeared.

Had something unerring taught her to "beware the blue butterfly of love"? Had she guessed? Had she believed? He could not find her until after supper, when she astonished him by dancing alone. But he could not even catch her eye. She took her applause indifferently and was gone. He went away unobserved and shaken.

The real reason of her disappearance was the silent wrath of Pauline, coming on from an earlier engagement to pick her up; who arrived just in time to witness this scandal.

Pauline had always declared herself conventional, and to have her baby sister monopolising a ball-room floor alone — oh, it was too impossible! She swept Judith out of the room and upstairs and down again into the motor in a fine smouldering rage: — caught her up, so to speak, in the calm before the whirlwind, bore her well within her own doors. There,—the vulgarity, the impropriety, the utter lack of all sweet maidenliness, not to say modesty,

were hurled at her as out of the heart of the storm, very much as indiscriminate branches and leaves might have blown over her from a real tempest. Judith, finely superior, scorned to dodge. Let them come, let them! Let them hit her and kill her! What did she care?

They still pelted her, but they fell wide, till she heard Pauline demand —

"And what was Reggy doing there? Who asked him?" And that was the lightning flash to her nervous intelligence, the lightning flash that lit one figure — Reggie Pennell. She met it with just such a black silence as follows a real illumination.

Soon Pauline was saying, "What would Reverdy say? His little sister pirouetting like any chorus-girl! It would break his heart." And what would he say to her, Pauline, was what she really dreaded to know, all the time.

At mention of her brother's dear name Judith's eyes softened. "I am sorry, Paula," she said. "Of course, I did not mean to do anything wrong. They teased me and teased me,— and I have danced ever so many times at school, and I cannot see any harm, I do not understand why it was, now. But if it was, I am honestly sorry, and I apologise to you."

"How could you do it, Judy?" Pauline unwisely persisted. "Ferdinand will be put out beyond measure."

"I do not believe that," Judith said calmly. "I shall ask him, and I don't believe you can sustain your position, anyway. I shall ask Ferdinand why it is all right to dance with men touching you and saying silly nonsense to you, and wrong to dance like the wind or the sea all alone."

"Not wrong exactly, but not nice," Pauline qualified.

"Oh! '*Nice!*' If you come to that, it is a good deal nicer than sitting behind things and letting men hold your hand and lean over you, the way most of the girls were doing. I call that '*not nice,*'—and sly and underbred and horrid! Just horrid, low-down and sickening. Men are horrid, too! I hate them,—all except Reverdy."

"And Reggy? Not your great admirer Reggy? Was Paula deep in this question?"

"No, not except him. I hate him worst of all!" she caught her breath spasmodically. "I suppose you don't mind, Paula; you will go on dancing with Mr. Pennell and all the rest, letting them hug you; for that is what it amounts to. Perhaps you do not mind. Perhaps you like it. But I think the way people act together is disgusting. I had rather stay alone. It makes me feel higher and happier. I had rather feel lonesome than ashamed of myself!"

And now came the rain. The heart of the cloud was open and flooding tears came to her relief.

Pauline comforted her sweetly, a little frightened, and never revived the subject.

Oddly enough, it was Ferdinand who objected. He took it up with Pauline with a gravity.

"If you have her here, you will have to attend to her, Polly. She cannot get running wild, you know. It won't do at all. She is not like you. She won't go half way. She is not an ordinary girl. Women start like that for hell. This town is no place for her, anyway. Have you any real notion what she is up to, half the time?" For he, too, had his reason, and had pondered her appearance at that Long Island road-house more than often.

"She does not mean any harm. She is the most innocent child ever born." Pauline fell back on it, as usual, in closing any and every such discussion.

"Granted," her husband said to-day, "but Pennell is not in her class."

"What has he got to do with Judy?" Pauline enquired casually.

"That depends."

"He has never given her a second thought," said Pauline sharply.

"If he has not, it is because he has not got through a long first. He is daft over her. He may not exactly think about her, but he feels her. I tell you, Polly, she is not to be ignored or let off the leash. You have got to face it. She is a

raving beauty and she has none of the ordinary sensuous relenting. Those women raise the devil with men, because they don't care. And when they do,—the devil does his work with them. You must watch her or send her home. I refuse to be responsible for things that may happen."

"Set your heart at rest about her. Our people are Puritan at the last ditch," Pauline said.

"But their friends tremble for them," he replied, with a direct glance that implied more perfect comprehension than she had supposed him to possess. "I tell you once for all, that she has a mad-cap fascination—the same essence that led us all after a gipsy-cart when we were boys. I insist that you shall recognise the danger and prevent her being made unhappy."

Never had Ferdinand insisted before. It would have been cause for jealousy that his solicitude had been for another, except that to be jealous of Ferd would have been to lose one's sense of humour.

She supposed he had finished, but as she turned to leave him, he said, "Apropos of Pennell,—he was seen with Judith at a road house."

"I know it."

"You kept awfully still about it, my dear."

"I saw no reason for speaking of it."

And now it was Ferdinand's turn to drop the subject.

The next time Reggie Pennell called it was to

learn that both Mrs. Braddish and Miss Judith were out of town. At his club he found a line from Pauline telling him she would be back in time for luncheon with him, as arranged, on the day next but one. When Judith would be back there was no hint.

Life had grown impossible for the sisters. It could not go on so indefinitely. It was not long before matters came to an open break impossible to ignore. Pauline was reading Verlaine one afternoon after luncheon, liking to keep up her French and never seeing the futility of doing it solely with the vocabulary of a poet, when Martin very unexpectedly put aside the curtain and came into the room.

"I beg pardon," he began rather nervously, noticing her glance of surprise, "but could I be spared out this evening? It is something very particular," he added, as Mrs. Braddish frowned slightly.

"This is not your day out, Martin?" she asked incredulously.

"No, I know it, M'am."

"And I am having guests at dinner."

"I know it, Mrs. Braddish. That is the reason I hated to ask. But I can put an excellent man in my place, better than I am. I will show him everything,—and if you please, it is very particular." His voice sounded like a prayer.

"Not to-night, Martin. I am dining out nearly all next week. You can have a night almost any time, perhaps next Sunday. I cannot say definitely yet."

"It is this evening I need to be away," he repeated stupidly.

"Oh, no, not to-night. I should dislike a stranger fumbling through the courses. Another time—" She dismissed him and he stood awkwardly as if he could not accept her refusal and yet was afraid to protest. Scarcely an hour later Judith came in like a whirlwind, ran upstairs breathless and into the library without apology.

"Where is Martin, Polly? I want him," she announced.

"Somewhere downstairs, I suppose. Ring for the tea if you are in a hurry for it. I am reading." Judith caught up the slim white volume and sniffed contemptuously.

"Where is Martin?" she rang again impatiently as she spoke.

"Do sit down, Judith, and stop fussing. Martin is a little upset this afternoon about something. He is slow on the bell for the first time."

"You did not refuse him permission to go out, did you? I came back especially to get him. Ferd let me have the car."

"Judith, where have you been? You have not disobeyed me again?"

Judith measured her sister mentally, keeping silent. "It is most improper for you to mix in with people beneath you, as you do. You ought not to know anything about,—such things," she ended rather vaguely, trusting her comprehension.

But Judith was gone. Her place at dinner was unfilled. She returned before eight but went straight up to her own room and remained there. The next morning Martin offered his notice, but his mistress refused to accept it, with an utter graciousness that bewildered him.

She then sent for her sister and Judith, languid but resolute, came down to the elaborate boudoir expecting trouble. She found Pauline ready with an ultimatum. "I refuse all responsibility of you in future, Judith, if you refuse to obey my restrictions. Martin is such a valuable servant! And now I shall have to make a point of dismissing him, if you have mixed in. We need never have known anything of his private life, and now he is in danger of losing his place and getting into trouble with me, just because you got out of your place. It is so queer of you, Judith!"

"It was even queerer for that girl who died last evening," Judith said wearily.

"My sympathy is all with Martin," her sister said quickly. "He probably got involved with some unprincipled creature. Of course he had no idea of

dragging us into it. He keeps his silver better than any butler I ever had."

"No, it was just the fact of its being all our own fault that dragged me into it," Judith said without heat.

"Does he know that I know what has been going on? If he does, you have put me in a most unpleasant position. I assumed that he had no idea I knew. You seem to have no innate sense of propriety, Judith. It is so unlike me!"

Still Judith preserved her deadly calm. "You blame me for going to that dying girl, and yet you went to a nasty play of the underworld last night, with Reggy Pennell. And you both knew what it all meant. And you did not care. Oh, Paula!" The reproach in her voice was sadder than tears.

"It was very frank, of course, but everybody goes and that establishes it as all right," Pauline justified. "It is also perfect art. One has to face all sorts of social problems nowadays, and needs all the light one can get on one's own theory."

"'And a fine crop of damned souls these frank discussions are sowing, too,' as Orren says."

"You are unjust, and Orren is ignorant. This play is exquisitely presented and there is nothing repellent displayed. The poor girl who takes the leading rôle has had such a cruel story it heightens the dramatic effect — that is, the lesson, I should say," she corrected herself hastily.

"The box office receipts, you really mean."

"When one is forced to realise what an unfair struggle it is between girls and the world's mercy—" began Paula sweetly.

"Oh, Lordy, don't, Paula! Don't sentimentalise over this girl. Orren told me she was one of the lucky ones, who had kicked high enough after a sensational divorce from a well known roué to become an object of curiosity for the inwardly vile. And you, a lady, went to see her in a gilded repetition of her dirty life, with a man, presumably a gentleman, of your own set. And then you take high ground with me on respectability!"

"Ferdinand never goes out evenings, as you know very well," said Pauline, ignoring the more serious accusation.

"No, and you would not have cared to go with him last night, if he did. Ferdinand has his faults, but they do not lower the tone of society as much as yours, because it is the women who influence women, in the end."

"What I choose to do only affects myself. Ferd does not care, and Reg can take care of himself," Pauline said quietly.

"Oh, yes, all men can do that, wonderfully! Even Martin!" cried Judith bitterly. "They protect their reputation, their health, their future, with clairvoyant insight. But you are my Polly, and nobody does anything that it does not affect somebody

else." Her eyes filled as she went rapidly on. "Let me tell you what that poor girl said to me last night, when I thought she was saved and going to get well. 'I never mistrusted Martin, Miss. He said it was what people were made for. I knew he lived with your sister. I felt he saw the ways of high society, and whatever he said was right, I was ready to do. I could not set myself against him, when he had so much more chance to know how grand people live. But of course, you see, it was all different for a working girl. We are too ignorant to understand—and now—it is too late.' When Martin got there, after your dinner party, it was all over. You knew she died, I suppose? I presume Martin will pass it all over as something quite natural and inevitable; beneath your notice. You, and ladies like you, have kept her sewing for you at starvation pay, until she had no vitality; and we have kept Martin caged till when he does get out he is like an animal hungry for prey. Of course he wants love and a home and of course his senses are not in leash like Reggy Pennell's and yours. Your blue blood damns your red blood, but Martin has not any! You and Reggy Pennell are the same story in an edition de luxe. Only you have elegant manners and never let your emotions run away with you. You are too selfish to risk anything and Reggy Pennell is too anxious not to be compromised, too keen on looking out for him-

self. You and he can go to a dance and have all the excitement you want in making believe love to music. Martin and Jenny have not any such chance. She has to let herself be kissed on a park bench because she has not any drawing-room. That is all the difference!"

Pauline heard her to the end, too amazed, perhaps, to interrupt, then, "How dare you, Judith?" she cried indignantly. "I forbid you to speak so to your own sister!"

"You did, Paula, I saw you when I was a little girl, almost the first time I ever saw Mr. Pennell to know who he was by name. I did not know it was any harm then."

"Well,—what is one to do?" Pauline's voice was hard and reckless. She threw up her head as defiantly as Judith's own. As she stood so the resemblance was striking.

"Why not *be*, for a change?"

"Anything else?"

"What has made you like this, Polly?" Judith's eyes were full of tears. "You used to read, you were not always tearing about after excitement, 'dragging your corpse from place to place.'"

"I am no worse than the rest," Pauline shrugged, but she sighed as she said it.

"No, all of your set give false weights everywhere. You talk to men as if you were capable of the last sacrifice if once you really felt a great pas-

sion,—and you know you would not be. You know, all of you, however much you felt the inclination, when it came to doing anything really big, and proving that you meant what you said — that you really cared — you would funk it!”

“Thank you, dear.”

“Oh, you need not. It is not altogether a compliment. It is another measure of falsity. You are not square with yourself and so you cannot be with anybody else.”

“You do not think I have any moral nature, then?”

“Orren says you have just enough to keep you from being satisfactory. You are too moral to enjoy sin and too weak to enjoy righteousness.”

“Well, upon my word!” the homespun exclamation came out amazingly from Pauline’s pretty lips.

“He says he respects an honest and hearty sinner; and I agree with him.”

“You do?”

“Yes, one who sins because he wants something enough to throw his soul into the bargain, or because he is born so, and honestly living out his nature. I hate pretending you care or that you are right when you know you are wrong, or trying to cheat others into thinking so.”

“And I love reserve.”

“And yet you will go to a play with a man and watch sham sin at the expense of some one else,

and come home and justify yourself by discussion of a problem I would die to mention ; and if I try to help in a real tragedy, you think me without a sense of shame, and blame me. I do not understand your world."

"Outward appearance is the garment of civilisation, my dear Judith," Paula explained. "Since Eden we have grown too sophisticated to be trusted in the nude. Even Truth walks in drapery."

"That is a disgusting theory. Reverdy told me once, if he could do it he would have the great truths taught with reverence by scientists who were qualified ; serious men in awe of creation and creative power, but not hinted at on concert hall stages, vicious, provocative, curiosity exciting !"

"Did Rev talk of such things with you? I am astonished."

"Of course. We talked of everything solemn. He says Love will turn her face away and weep tears of blood at such desecration of her worship."

"Poor darling unpractical Rev! He was born for domestic life."

"He worries about you, Paula, all the time. He is afraid you are making a mistake. He hopes so much for a little sister for his nephew." She was embarrassed in saying it, but brave enough to do what she could toward her brother's admonition to "help Pauline get a nobler aim in view than mere pleasure."

"You cannot understand," Pauline said quickly, as if to dismiss the suggestion. "It is a sin when one does not love."

"Is it not a sin to refuse your half of the bargain?"

"Does Ferd keep his? You know he does not!" her sister retorted.

"But how is your failing going to help it for him or for you?"

"I cannot set the crooked world straight! 'Heigh O, yawned King Francis.'" Pauline took up the manicure and began idly to polish her nails as she spoke. Judith waited.

"Of course not," she said gently, "but you can begin. Even if one woman began to give honest weights, to be absolutely true, it would spread. I am discouraged too about most of the great universal movements for women—they get so far away from the trouble. But what I feel is, no matter about making them over till we balance evenly, ourselves, or try to."

"Oh, let them legislate, by all means! They adore it. Such women might as well do that as anything."

"No, we are individuals, not cattle. You cannot round us up that way. No two of us are alike except where we are all alike. If you and I were to play fair where we touch other women,—servants, sewing girls, friends in our own set, it would help

to start things right. Anyway, it is the surest way to lift our corner of the universe out of degradation. As many more women as we can interest would reach out to their circle, till we could get them all, everywhere!" Her face was radiant at her own vision.

"Judith, the apostle of sweetness and light to the fallen masses!" mocked Pauline. "I suppose you are convinced that women of the street are of a higher order of beings than respectable law-abiding citizens, and the tempted shop girl infinitely beyond the limited appreciation of the Queens of Society!"

"Make all the fun of me you wish, all I ask is to be spared misrepresentation," Judith said. "There is enough of that here without including me. I hope you will do as you ought by Martin." She left the room quietly but with a grand colour, sign of the temper no reformer can afford to be without.

Patmos, following her, sneezed insolently on the threshold.

CHAPTER VII

THE VOICES

THE swinging windows in the great court room of the City Hall were set wide open. The leaves on the solitary trees outside in the Square did not move. It was a morning in earliest June and hot, but their greenness and shadow gave an impression of midsummer, and even a hint of the open country and informality to the grim abode of Law, where Evil and its just reward met and never parted.

Lawyers' boys with their bags, a clerk or two, later the junior partners came and went, conferred, stepped in and out, thickened in groups, dispersed, intent on their own affairs. A few seated themselves at long tables directly beneath the canopied throne of the judge, assorting papers for the case paramount. It was all stupidly familiar to the court officers in uniform. There was a heavy note of indifference in their languid discharge of perfunctory duties. Every one seemed supremely bored except Judith. She sat well back among the empty seats, accompanied only by a deferential junior part-

ner, who was there to hold the place of his distinguished senior counsel, until the most pressing questions of the office day could be despatched by Authority. It was a noted firm. There were financiers, of too much renown, to be assisted to continental residence without benefit of publicity or delay; there were appearances to be cancelled and carried over, there were untold millions to be protected, and the right reading of laws newly enacted to be construed in their favourable or unfavourable bearing on points at issue, and recent rulings to be interpreted, and the miscarriage of old justice to be set in orderly motion behind closed doors. In this green room of the law, the senior counsel was preparing his public presentation of every sort of sin and grievance. The accumulation of routine schedule must be cleared away before he could appear even for so personally appealing a client as this one who had presented herself,—a refreshingly cool item in the last weary hours of the week-end calendar.

Her business was a mere formality. He would be there in ample time to attend to it. Upon the entrance of the judge now, she rose without instruction, from an instinctive respect, rather than any certainty of precedent. Law was in her blood. All her ancestors had been of the profession; pleaders, consulting counsel in grave matters, jury lawyers, judges of the highest court, sometimes. Even

the red-faced mace-bearer, preceding him, could not cheapen her impression of the judge who entered this morning and seated himself with dignity upon that canopied attempt at theatrical display, which, though discarding the wool-sack, America clings to still. He impressed her at once. This was no Tammany upstart, no hostage to any party. This slight distinguished figure wearing the flowing black robe with such grace, was of America's peerless nobility. The head was fine and nobly poised. The nose sensitively cut, the white hair soft and flat on the delicate temples, the blue eyes keen as frost, and the gleam of humour that played over his face from time to time, as faint and elusive, yet positive, as the pale sunshine that glows and fades over a winter landscape.

The usual formulæ now began. Proceedings were declared. Lawyers rose and deferred, and carried over and excused absent clients, and went away, or objected and argued and finally submitted. One after another as the calendar was read, cases were called and rapidly dismissed. Every one seemed anxious to get a holiday under any pretext without regard for any other interest.

"We shall come next but one," the junior partner told her. "Too bad you have had to wait. If you will not mind, I will just step out and fix up a little matter with a man whose case is to be

settled out of court. We shall both be here by the time we are wanted."

He motioned to his office boy, a shrewd lad with the precocious eye of one who has seen and overheard the intimate secrets of maturity.

"You stay here, and come for me when we are called," he directed.

The lad looked admiringly at Judith. He sat down as if proud of his guard of honour. Presently the legal habit grew too strong for him. "Got your papers?" he asked professionally.

"I think the lawyers have them," she replied.

"You will have to go down to the other division. All the divorce cases that are tried out, have to. You are a divorce case? You are Malvern versus Malvern, if I remember right." He was intent on the affairs of his office. He had no idea of being rude.

Judith smiled, feeling rather uncomfortable. "No, I am just coming of age," she explained, and was at loss to interpret his apparent disappointment. Was he sorry she was not one of those miserable women forced to public adjustment? Or was it sheer fascination with his calling, young as he was? Four lawyers were on their feet, a brief wrangle varying the monotony. The judge sipped his ice water and glanced at Judith. The leaves outside never stirred. The jargon of "incompetent, ir-

relevant and immaterial" jingled meaninglessly in her ears. She had never been in any court before. Even now her real self was far away. It was Class Day at Reverdy's university. The junior partner had spoken of it. He was, himself, of the same college, and was longing to get away. There were only a dozen people in the bare emptiness. Her eyes noted them idly. A girl and man were sitting by themselves in front. They looked like Class Day. He wore a half yachting costume, modified for town convention. His straw hat looked young. She was dainty and fresh, the pink roses in her hat frivolous enough to belong at any spread on the Quad.

Judith listlessly supposed them waiting for some one, as she was herself. Perhaps they had come to get control of their own money, too, like herself. Suddenly then she saw the girl go forward. The junior partner had come back. "This case will not take more than five minutes, a mere technicality," he whispered, reassuringly. "I will go and telephone our office. We come in next. I am sorry you have had to wait."

Judith nodded. She was watching the girl step forward and be sworn. This over, she seated herself on the witness stand, crossed her white shoes and laid her gay parasol across her knees. Judith began to hope she would not have to go up there when her turn came. When the room was full, it

must be a terrible ordeal, she thought. The oath made her nervous. How serious truth was and how people tampered with it all the time! That was probably why the judge was so solemn. Church never bore down so upon the truth, and all the truth and nothing but the truth. Why, it was more like religion than a law court. She caught her breath over the revelation it was to her that such might be the case.

While she reflected, the lawyer had risen and begun his questions abruptly.

“Your name?”

The girl answered as abruptly and without a trace of discomposure. “May Ivison.”

“Your profession?”

“Dramatic.”

Judith was listening intently. Junior counsel had come back and was conferring in an undertone with another attorney opposing another case.

“You are acquainted with the co-respondent in this case?”

“Oh, yes.” She said it lightly, carelessly — not as if it was a disgrace.

“You have known his wife intimately?”

“I am her best friend.” She nodded conclusively, with a glance at the judge.

“Relate, please, the occurrence of May seventh, last.”

"I went by motor with her and two men friends to a road-house on Long Island."

"You stopped there for tea?" the lawyer prompted.

"Yes. We stopped there for tea. I saw Mr. —, I mean, I saw the co-respondent in this case,"—correcting herself—"right in front of me, with a lady."

"What was he doing?"

"Registering."

"How did he register?"

"Raymond Cottle and wife."

"How do you know?"

"I stood directly behind him."

The register was presented in evidence.

"Is this the co-respondent?"

The lawyer's voice sounded as if he was merely pursuing the routine of a game as he offered her the likeness for identification.

"Yes, that's Ray Cottle," she replied, as if the pack of cards had cut the right knave.

"Presumably meaning Raymond Cottle," the judge interpolated reprovingly.

How he turned and looked at her! Judith winced. But the girl turned half toward him, quite unperturbed by his reproof.

"Yes, your Honour," she said easily.

"That will do," her lawyer said. "I offer the photograph in evidence."

She left the stand, returned to her escort with a smile, and together they left the Court room. The lawyers talked; the judge said something to them. Judith's face was ashen and tense. "What does it mean? What has she done?" she asked, as her own counsel joined her.

"Sworn away a man's reputation for money, I judged. I did not hear much of it. I am sorry you did. It is a common occurrence; growing more so."

"It was Cottle versus Cottle, undefended," the junior partner explained. "Both sides petitioned for relief, probably. You must forgive me for leaving you,"—turning to Judith remorsefully,— "I had no idea anything unpleasant was likely to come up. One offence follows another so quickly with us, we forget it is not the same to outsiders."

But Judith was strangely shaken. Was this life? Was this her own world? Where were the happy times and the dear joy of living? Where was God and right? And why was the truth and all the truth and nothing but the truth that she had worshipped as an infallible Goddess, now become a shameful thing to be hidden out of sight of all honest hearts? Could Truth be hideous? Deformed? She scarcely got through her first shock of the horrid happening that had transpired before her enough to understand anything definitely. Her own part in the morning business was fortunately

slight, and when she answered the deferential question or two put to her by the good judge himself, her glance fell upon the handsome face of Raymond Cottle, whose photograph, still on the lawyer's table, marked in red "*Exhibit 2*," smiled straight up at her out of dancing eyes. For one thing, only, at the moment, she thanked God. It was the face of no man she knew. Just then it was caught up and restored to its place with other marked exhibits, letters, etc., but it haunted her for a long time after; and she heard, over and over in memory, the light tone of the actress as she said, "That's Ray Cottle."

Her counsel presented her to the judge in the intermission which followed, but she was not herself, and in reply to his kind hope that he might meet her again, she shivered and her voice held a mere echo of its valiant vibration as she cried, "Not here! Judge Cassidy! Never here, I do pray I never have to come to a court again, in all my life."

And the judge understood, for he knew that innocence needs no law. It was not strange to him that this girl trembled over another's guilt as if she herself had been convicted.

The proximity of a jail has no terror for an honest man, but vice humanized comes within one's private reckoning with the world. Judith knew that law was made to protect society, but how came

it to make evil possible? Reverdy had always held that the more laws a man obeyed, the freer he was. There must be other kinds of freedom Reverdy never had met. She would ordinarily have been eager to talk with the judge and get him to set her on the way back to security again, but she felt baffled, ignorant, unsure of herself to-day. She was eighteen. She was in full possession of her own considerable fortune. She had anticipated what it was to mean; hoped, "dreamed greatly." And the colour had faded out of everything in a few minutes. What did she, after all, know about life? Martin's victim had said, "the rich need never pay; it is the poor who pay to-day — never to-morrow." And again, "We are human, too. We mean no harm, only a little fun on Sundays."

What was this evil element that got inextricably wound up with their "good time"? What sort of pleasure was this, that led girls down to death, from which they could never come back to try life over again?

Who or what was to save her, Judith, in her ignorance of the hidden meanings that went stalking all about her? There was the sister of Mary Haggerty, too. She had disappeared, and Mary confessed frankly, "She saw he had got tired of her, so she just went away, first."

Reverdy lived as if even after death the love between two souls had just begun. Did people get

tired of those they loved, in real life? In that plain prosaic real life that her dear Stevenson described as "a world of grown-up people, with umbrellas"? In fiction of course, and in romantic poetry one encountered all sorts of misery. Esmeralda and Hetty had drawn veils for her while she was still too young to be hurt — but she shrank from the existence of sin in her own world, to-day, in the fresh rapture of the breaking summer. If one could only be sure one need never care for any man!

That would be the safe and happy way. But to lose one's control, to care for life only because of a man — and then perhaps have him get tired of one — over and over she swore she would never marry. She implored God to hear her and keep her safe and unspotted from the world. And by the world she meant really that heady snare of love, already dimly suspected as crouching somewhere along her path: already resenting it, before it became significant. And suddenly then she knew an added reason why this had all so sickened her. The seventh of May, last, she too had been at a road-house on Long Island, and Reggie Pennell knew these creeping things and yet he had taken her, and she had seen her own sister's husband there with a stranger woman,— this same woman, she was almost sure, who had said so lightly, "That's Ray Cottle."

Was life going to be horrible? What could she do to help? And if all she had begun to suspect vaguely was true of one man, was it true of all? All except Reverdy, of course,— and Orren — yes, only Reverdy and Orren she allowed the ark of refuge from her sweeping flood of general condemnation.

Pauline wrote in her next weekly letter to Reverdy:

Since her birthday Judy has become extraordinarily difficult. She has on her Joan-of-Arc expression most of the time, alternating that with her "Oh, Paula!" look. I think she counts the minutes until she gets back to you. She has weighed us all in her own balances and found us wanting. She will never run in the established groove and I begin to share your fear for her future. Peter Ormsby wants to marry her but she seems to dread any mention of it. Is that foreign Craigie boy with his Aunt, now? Did you know he wrote to her? He does. She seems to have no sentiment about it and the letters are full of horses and travel and nothing lower than the classics by way of allusion. We do not speak the same language and never shall. I am a wreck and need my trip abroad more than ever before, so it is providential that you want her with you. What did set her so askew on matrimony? Have you the least idea?

With fond love

PAULA.

Strangely enough it was to Reggy Pennell the girl confided her estrangement from life as the world lives it. He found her staring into the library fire-

place the next afternoon; staring into it as if it were not there. He was sure she was "away" as the Celts call it. He waited a little then began to chat. She raised her eyes still possessed by her own visions.

"Paula will be in soon. Don't talk unless you really want to, terribly. I am busy."

"Busy?"

"Hearing the Voices," she replied, as if it were a common-place.

"You did not look as if they were happy ones."

She shook her head sadly. "They are not. They are tragic voices, martyr voices,—evil and false trying to drown the brave and true. And oh, I thought life was so beautiful and the Knights and Ladies all shining!" she confessed.

"There is a good deal of beauty in life." He smiled suggestively at her. It was a long time since he had had a chance to speak with her alone; not since that night of her first dance. He had forgotten how beautiful she really was, fancied himself exaggerating it in his exile.

"Beauty for beauty's sake that people talk so much about, easily gets ugly. It is the ugly right thing that brings beauty and no one seems to find it out until it is too late."

"Another broken doll?" he said lightly. He could not argue the moralities with a girl. Women

were not supposed to question or reverse the order of the world.

"Why do they lie to us?" she asked abruptly.

"Does any one lie to you?"

"Nobody tells the whole truth."

"But you have read for yourself," he began.

"Milton's Eve did wrong, but she began again —"

"Doing wrong?"

"No. She began life over, outside her silly paradise, working for her living."

"And Byron?" he enquired. He wanted to keep her talking, and was groping at loss among his college associations for memories of a name. "He is superb, isn't he? The great Liberator! We have a photograph of his monument in Athens. Julian Craigie sent it to us. It always makes me tingle."

"And 'Don Juan'?"

"I have not read that. I must."

Pennell had never read anything else of Byron or dreamed of him in any other light. "But you do not find the modern writers all in Arcady, do you?" he asked.

"George Eliot and Meredith and Hardy do write of sad things, but always sadly. It is like a requiem at a funeral when the sadness has to come in their novels. They do not laugh when people do wrong, or league together to make it seem right. They pity the souls that Fate overtakes."

"And the people who are writing now?"

"They are like these people we know all about us, repulsive, are they not?" she said eagerly. "They exploit evil conditions to make themselves a career, without really caring to find the way out."

"And still you read Balzac, Paula tells me."

"I love him because he is the one most like God. He sees it all, on all sides but he never makes sin attractive or lets it get the best of him in the end. And he never makes you want to try it yourself. He has profound compassion even for his worst characters."

"Balzac loves his Valerie," he quoted.

"In spite of her weakness not because of it. He is a great Master. I do wish he were alive and Mayor of New York!"

Pennell laughed. "It would be sport to see Balzac and Heminway run against each other," he said. "He is rather inclined toward that quarter, in an offish sort of way. Funny game for a chap like him."

"I do not know him."

"He knows who you are though. He quoted a French poem about you, not so badly."

"I know French poetry and poetry and poetry," she exclaimed, disregarding his digression.

"You cannot altogether approve?"

"If a very great real love is the excuse, almost anything is right. That is why I admire Zola and

Hugo. I would have stolen that loaf of bread for Jean Valjean, to save a life I loved."

"I am sure you would," he said earnestly. "And would you steal another's heart, too?" he supposed she would either laugh or resent it. To his amazement her eyes filled with tears.

"I do not know. I wish you would not ask me."

"Does not love excuse—all?" he spoke very low. He did not know what he meant or care. It was fun.

"If it is Love, it sacrifices itself first," she said slowly, as if thinking aloud.

"She was forgiven much, a certain woman, 'because she loved much,' was she not?" he continued insinuatingly.

"I am so tired of that crooked old bromide!" she retorted impatiently. "She was not forgiven because she loved so many Reggie Pennells. It was because she loved Him who sent her away ashamed but able to believe in herself again."

"That is theology. I pass," he said with a shrug. He liked to discuss love in all its intricacies with her, but Judith had a way of getting off the exciting topic into abstractions. "I would do anything for the woman I loved," he said now, to test her, looking into the fireless grate.

"Would you? How splendid!"

"Try me. Set me a hurdle."

"But you do not love me. Pretending would not

be the same thing at all. It is just this pretending you want a thing, or have it, that makes all the weights false all round."

"I would do a good deal for you,—more than you believe," he said, sobered for the moment by her face.

"But you do not love me and the splendid thing you are offering to do would have to be a 'miracle d'amour.'" She hummed the lovely line of Massenet.

"How do you know? What do you know of love?" He lit a cigarette.

"You did that exactly like a man on the stage," she laughed. "Love scene, slow music, leading-lover down front." She mimicked his manner. "Well, if you do not think I am,—suppose I were,—and you were,—just suppose it—what would you demand of me?" Curious how it interested him, this answer of hers.

"Do you want me to tell you honestly?"

"Would it be to 'kill Claudio,' or to love you as no woman was ever loved before?" he blew her a smoke ring kiss, since she was not looking toward him.

"No. To go to work."

"Work? Why?"

"That is what a man is for. If he does not actually have to, he can help some one who does. Everybody ought to work. God works."

"So does Satan. He is the little busy D—
never at rest."

She did not look amused.

"How doth the little busy D.
Improve each shining hour?"

I mean, what are you going to do for a life work
yourself, Mademoiselle Joan?"

"Will you promise not to tell?"

"Not unless I ought to. If you are going to rob
or set fires —"

"I am going to give my whole life to helping
girls not to love men."

"Mon Dieu!" It was all he could have got out.
He forgot Paula's many reproaches. He congratulated
himself he had said it in French.

"Yes. It is so terribly necessary," she assured
him drawing her clean-cut figure to its height with
a long breath, reminding him of nothing but a white
sail loved by the wind of salt and wandering.

"What put you up to it?" he managed to say.

"When I was young, I did not realise it," she told
him, "but now that I have grown up and got
older, I see that if men get girls to love them, it is
all over with their doing anything else,— sometimes
even with their loving God. I have made friends
with ever so many girls Paula does not know about
and they all tell me the same story. They are happy
and good until some man kisses them. After that

they don't care for work or church or anything. It is just the way Apollo drove poor Cassandra mad, all over again. Only these girls serve counters not shrines, and are named Mamie or Julia or Nan, and they have not had the chance or education we have."

"You adorable fanatic!" he sighed.

"Don't look at me that way,—as if I were crazy."

"Your idea is that those the Gods destroy they first kiss?"

"I am not mad. You need not look as if I were. No man has ever kissed me and never shall!" she boasted.

Pennell had a good mind to do it at once. "What does Paula say?" was all he cared to venture.

"She does not know. Nobody does but you, and you promised not to tell."

"Paula will not listen to it a moment. You know she will not."

"Probably you do not know that I am of age and pretty rich, so it does not matter what Paula says. I am going to buy a lovely house of my own and have girls live with me who are sick or out of work, and I shall go round to all the most wretched boarding houses and bring away the discouraged ones and see that the hungry ones have enough to eat."

"By yourself?"

"I have not planned it all out fully yet. If I listen the Voices will tell me how. Probably I shall have some good woman live with me, to help me. If every woman helped all she possibly could, we could make all the poor girls well and happy soon. I shall hate to finish in New York, but of course we shall have to go right on,—with all the other cities, until—"

"The work gave out, I suppose. But where should we come in, we men, I mean?"

"If they were noble and gentle, like Reverdy and Launcelot, we would invite them in. If they were horrid and cruel they could stay out."

"Men are not so bad." To his surprise she trembled.

"No, they are not bad, but they have too much power."

"That is not their fault."

"No, perhaps not, but after we like them we cannot stop," she shivered. "Oh, I am so afraid of that!"

"You, of all women!"

"Yes, I am. I do not understand it. I am always afraid of a thing I do not understand because I cannot fight it. It poisons and darkens all my friendships down here. It was not like this at home. Let us not talk about it."

"Let me just ask you one question more,—are women never cruel?"

"Yes, cruel and mean too, sometimes. I have seen women in Paula's set who are white tyrants; worse than any man would stoop to be."

He looked her full in the eyes. In all his life of a puppet he had never wanted anything as he wanted this girl before him. And in all his life he had never so deliberately realised his impotence with any woman as with her.

"When do you begin your crusade, Miss Joan?" he asked respectfully.

"Not until the autumn. I am going to Reverdy to-morrow for the summer. Paula is too worn out by me to take me abroad with her. I could go alone if I wanted to, and the Ormsbys invited me to go with them, but I had rather be with my brother."

"And the Alps?" he reminded her. He had so hoped Paula would relent and take her along. Give him one summer with her over there and he could surely bring her round.

"Reverdy is higher than the Alps."

"He approves your career, no doubt."

"He will. He does not know about it yet. No one does but you."

"I envy him most of all living men," he said gravely.

"He would be sorry for you," she said sweetly, with one of her longest glances, "but you will never be happy till you stop pretending in earnest:

no matter how many silly women play at being in love with you; for Orren says, being loved is delicious, but being in love is one continuous adventure."

"He is right," said Pennell sharply. "It is an adventure; gloomy wood, city street, highway and byway, dragon and magic fire, but 'he who loves and runs away, lives to love another day!' And 'a light heart lives long.'"

"And a brave one conquers all!" she concluded.

That night Pauline had the infelicity to prod him.

"You will turn Judy's head if you keep on taking her seriously, Reg. If she should fall in love with you it would be a mess all round."

"Can't you trust me?" He resorted to this tone always of late under fire.

"I hope not!" cried pretty Pauline. Reggy knew she spoke the truth. In her flippant nature any one note held strong, any dominant but change and excitement, new thrill, new risk, would be an irksome bore. Now why, having been Paula's for all their best years, had he turned traitor and found the steadfastness of this uncompromising child something he had unconsciously missed and found too late?

He was less gay than his wont as he shook his head in denial of Judith's taking any possible degree of concern for him. "She is going in to destroy

all women's idols. She has no faith in idol-worship; and what have I been but an idle worshipper ever since I knew you?" he said, bending to the inevitable yoke as gracefully as he was able.

It was Pauline's turn to marvel when he told her he was not sailing with them this year. Mood succeeded mood. "Later sometime," was the only hope she got from him. And one night at Baden, when she was counting the scant remaining days between them, his sailing being definitely settled, came his letter telling her briefly that he had gone to work "from need of variety."

"Europe is so stale, you know — and work is darkest Africa to me."

In the blankness of the summer she wondered if Judith would call this "playing fair." She knew what she called it. Not principle, but a younger woman.

CHAPTER VIII

HER LITTLE HOUSE OF CLAY

IT was six of a morning that same earliest June up in Reverdy's country. Down the street of the little town below the Rectory walked the village policeman, his lantern, still lighted, swinging by his knees. The sunshine mocked it as he went staunchly on after a refreshing sleep in the livery stable at the end of the long street. The faithful beams of the lantern, grotesquely pale, were a complete substantiation of his devotion to the trust reposed in him by his credulous townsfolk. These late and cheerful beams asserted him as a vigilant servant of the public weal holding his watch to the very hour when the village was astir to another round of dusty duties.

Julian Craigie had often seen the same sight of a winter morning as late as eight o'clock, and whistled derisively the watchman's motive from Die Meistersinger —

“Hört ihr Leut —
bewahrt euch von Ge-spenstern und Spuck!”

Already the front door of the old Craigie mansion stood wide open and the venturesome sunbeams ran in toward the sole occupant of the wainscotted hall-way. It was only a tall clock with a moon face, but its tick spoke untiringly. One might easily have mistaken it for something human. Perhaps it had gained an imagination from having lived so long in solitary companionship of Miss Lucretia Craigie. She certainly had constructed a psychology for it; noting how differently it struck at different hours and under varying circumstances of joy or stress. She had heard it groan,—sometimes it seemed surprised, again it broke out hurriedly as if to warn her, or tolled with a patience that suggested Time walking slower as youth receded. Through the night she heard it tick like a sleepless watchman stepping heavily. To Miss Lucretia, its voice was one of actual disapprobation or satisfaction as surely as the gilt framed mirror reflected those same emotions on her own worn face. Once it ran away, striking everything at once and then fell behind and stopped. And she let it stand so, to catch up, pending a corresponding crisis in her own life, and forgot to start it until the mute hands protesting, idle and aimlessly lifted, seemed to deride her as irresponsible and perfidious.

She was coming now across the sunbeams to wind her one changeless companion; slight and

erect, as she raised her hand toward the jolly moon face staring down at her, and laid the other affectionately on the mahogany case. Habit, with her, having become the child of the celibate as Balzac claims inevitable. The old clock had been less to her during the intervals when Julian had been with her. It had, even then, played its part, though. If it were not everlastingly talking to itself there, she could not be at peace. Once silent, she would miss it quickly enough. She wound all the clocks now, heirloom after heirloom. She had always done so. The duty of stewardship had been puritanically, even fanatically, observed. Her one brother, destined to carry on the fading grandeur of the Craigies, had died. And for Julian, his son, she had preserved and polished and pruned and protected, as she waited for him to grow up and come to take his place under the family trees and in the family footsteps.

He had come home to her from college at last a manly, charming lad, with something unlike the hillside ways in his blood, and the reputable old law office and the interminable settlement of his neighbours' quarrels. If Judith had been there then, it might have all seemed less impossible to him that first summer. But after weeks of vainly trying to settle into place, he had broken loose and gone abroad to study. He talked it over with Reverdy and together they broke it to Miss Lucretia as

gently as they could. Julian hated to disappoint her, but could a man live like this? No. And she would never be able to see why. At first he had begged her to go along, promising her all sorts of impossible things if she would. He would give up Italy. She would love England, he was sure. He was eager and generous like his father, but so young! How could she hope to explain his real responsibility to him?

"Why can't you go?" he repeated, his fingers measuring the window frame nervously.

"My dear boy,—leave this house where your own great-grandfather was born?" she protested.

"But he is not being born here, now. He does not need you. He has forgotten this house in paradise, a hundred years since," was his reply.

"You are your father over again," she sighed. "He never fully realised what it was to be born a Craigie,—or all it involved to carry out the family traditions."

"But you have not only preserved those, you have made such a host of entangling traditions for yourself, dear Heart,"—his voice was wheedling now, he knew he was intruding where no angel might, but he felt he was in the right.

"One follows tradition, one does not exactly make it, after four generations," she reminded him. "What do you mean, Julian?"

"Flowers, in front of pictures, never allowed to

fade,— wreathes on graves on certain days, anniversary observances, special feasts when silver is taken from vaults and cleaned and counted,— endless liturgys of domestic repetition,— and your own life, dear little Aunt of mine, where is it? Come away with me for a year and if you are homesick I will bring you back.”

If she longed to yield, there was that in her which remained firm against her natural inclination. She raised obstacle after obstacle, until he had gone, and even the village doctor was at loss for a time to rouse her to her usual interest in her sunny round of bird and flower. She could not forget Julian. Or put aside her crushing disappointment.

“It is only for a year. That is not much before a man settles down forever,” he told her in his first letter. But all her dreams of establishing an earthly line through him, of his ancestral acres and mortal belongings being restored to him, seemed fated to fade out in the actual light of event. In attempting to dictate terms to Providence she had failed. She grew frailer that summer. For the first time people spoke of her as an old lady. The minister called and reproved her affectionately for her attitude of unsubmission.

“He is so unlike his own people!” was her cry.

“You cannot bargain with the Almighty,” her pastor said gently. “Even so exact a science as biology recognises and rests on accidental varia-

tion." And both her reading and her inmost thought forced upon her the answer that neither could these higher types escape the fate of the lower.

History had repeated itself. That was all, leaving a blank where she had seen a future. Her brother had gone to Rome, set up a studio, married, gone over to the Catholic Church, become famous, an alien, and then when the quick fires had burned out and his only child left an orphan in a single year, she had begged for the boy. When he was sent over to her she had taken heart and lived again for joy of the day when Julian Craigie Fourth should inherit the old place with its furniture set at traditional angles that never had deflected, and its customs that never changed and its corner of the churchyard waiting to receive him beside the others who all slept there, at last, brought home from profaner quarters of the earth in some cases; not one name missing from the moss and stone when sunlight or moonbeam read the roll year after year.

After Julian went back to England for his grown-up education, it seemed to Miss Lucretia, while she waited, that it was always worst in May; the May-time that brought back everything else only brought memories to her and regrets for Julian. His letters to her with their varied foreign postmarks gave her the only throb life held for her now.

From Rome and Paris they came, for he was under the wander-spell, and through all his vacations followed his own spirit's leading. To her he was always gay, at his charming best, writing as if she were quite his own age. She brushed up her French a little with her old Meadows dictionary after one letter which ended —

Merci pour le petit "kiss" que vous avez si gentiment envoyé à votre Julian. Je vous envoie deux gros baisers — un pour chaque joue — à la Française.

A vous toujours,

JULIAN.

As he grew more mature, they came from Rome and Paris, with their account of his friends and their impressions of life and art. When they were filled with the marbles of the Vatican or the studios of Rodin or Barye, her lips were less firm after reading them. Any indication that Julian was going, might be already gone, as his father had before him, drove her straight to her Bible for support.

His Catholic sentiment was another tragedy to his aunt. When he wrote from Rome,

The Scala Santa is, scenically speaking, unrivalled. A long dark stairway — at the bottom Judas betraying his Master with a kiss, — that kiss still the universal emblem of betrayal, — a Roman wind on the stone floor to chill the knees of the faithful, — then up, up — till at last the penitent lifts his eyes to the glory of the great gold crucifix amid the glare and warmth of the candle flames.

What rapture for a poetic Prodigal! All the artist in me rose to the symbolism, as all the John Calvin in you is probably now warring in you as you read.

He usually restrained himself from any detail upon the subject he knew she dreaded, but once broke out with —

Canova is poetry in Parian. Rodin's Kiss may be in full possession, I prefer Canova's where Beauty holds Art enthralled and trembling beneath its spell. Bah! Rodin's hands are monstrous paws. Cupid's must have felt to Psyche like the caress of Beauty. I hate to think of a Rodin kiss but I fondly linger at the thought of a Canova one!

An American here asked me yesterday if I had seen *Barye's* "Kiss"? As he is solely a sculptor of animals, chiefly wild beasts at that, I thought it not bad.

Miss Lucretia Craigie thought it several things. That Julian must be infatuated with his life to so far forget himself as to share it quite so freely with a lady, was one of them. From Greece he wrote dutifully of moonlight on ruined columns and the wind-sown aconite blooms blowing on the Acropolis, sending her anemones sky-blue and scarlet, racing in the ruts of crumbled chariot wheels at Olympia, but it was to Judith now that he let himself go. To her he did not send chaunts of Pindar, but rhapsodies on draped torso, immortal marvels of frozen grace.

These are the gentlest expression marble ever revealed; smiling lines, draperies that caress, lyric curves and heroic muscles — the perfect animal and the supernatural human in one! The hint of power in these fragments is more convincing than the elaborate whole of modern mediocrity. The hard-won battle of asceticism seems a miracle here, under the influence of the relaxing loveliness of the Pagan ideal. Ugly little Saint Paul must have been a sorcerer. But don't tell Aunt Lucretia I said so!

At one time he was off mule-back, exploring with a guide for many days; sending them tokens when he chanced to remember a world beyond his blue Ægean and the vineyards, where all day long he studied the swaying forms of the peasants as their shining blades rose and fell in the shadowless glare. To his aunt came praying beads from the Doric shepherds, and a sacred lamp, but to Judith he sent photographs of torso, mere fragments of an arm or shoulder, so lovely they made her breathe short, and so convicting him of the sin of his father's passion it harrowed her for the inevitable in store for Miss Lucretia Craigie.

There could no longer be any doubt of his decision when he wrote —

This is the art I always knew must exist from my own longing for it. Here the divine, natural, and decent unite to produce these creatures of Greek perfection; vivid, sensuous, superhuman in that they transcend sex. Often subjectively lacking to our eyes, they have the unheard

music of line,—phraseless rhythm of the human form. When I first saw Apollo, for our childhood's sake, it seemed youth rising in the veins of Spring. May you see it in your dreams when sleep next sits upon your eyelids!

Now I am going swimming in the sunset and moonrise. If you were here we would wreck Ulysses!

Her reply carried an undertone of protest, but far from taking it seriously he ignored her mis-giving with a gaiety.

I got the ink bottle you threw at me in the last mail, Miss Martin Luther. Your brilliantly irresponsive mood puzzles me. I will not write more. I send you my red heart's throb to match the flower you used to wear in your hair.

Then for weeks he settled down in a tiny French village to work. The mischief was done. Unless a miracle intervened to help her, Miss Lucretia knew it. He would be a sculptor. He would never be a citizen of the Craigie inheritance. He would be a cosmopolitan. His refusal to come home for the summer sealed it. As well pray the Judgment books to be written upside down. He was her "fond Julian," of course, but he refused.

Your letter was brought me by the red-haired Gany-mede, who acts as mail carrier between the Poste and me. I wished to hug him for it, but remembered his surprise and became more prudent. You are the loveliest thing that ever happened, you must always be sure of that, whether I come home or not, Girl of my Heart!

It was after receiving this that Miss Lucretia made a disingenuous move. She asked Judith to write and suggest that as she was herself far from strong, all letter-writing was burdensome, much as she longed for his replies.

The girl responded and sent off a charming plea for her old friend, its only indiscretion being omission of her own desire to see Julian, if such she felt.

"You told him you were disappointed not to find him here, I hope?" Miss Lucretia suggested, furtively.

"No,—not just that, but I told him we missed him so we called him names!" she confessed. "That ought to suggest the sort of welcome waiting for him." It did not quite satisfy Miss Lucretia. It was not an appeal to a man's sentiment or chivalry such as she would have preferred.

But Julian's response was satisfactory and immediate. It was a letter, too, unlike any Judith had ever received from him. It was not, furthermore, one that she could read aloud even by skipping. Indeed it was all she could do to read it to herself and believe it was meant for her. To her, until his last one, his letters had always been of life, never personality predominant. He had kept their comradeship unspoiled. Nothing of *la vie inquiète*, nothing prophetic even, if he felt it himself, had obtruded. As a beautiful part of destiny

her heart held him vaguely apart, not with desire for any unknown tasting of life through him, but as she thought of health and youth, the light through beloved trees, the stars over her, or her life with Reverdy. From Greece he had lost his reserve with her as to his passion for the marble; his finest emotional treasure. Now he wrote almost recklessly.

Your note, a jewel, has come, dear Judith, my Jewel of Joys!

Thank you for adding to my list of desires. I am growing to have so many—or rather one so great, that it will require another life or two in which to attain realisation. Three of us working here together are fascinated with a little country lassie, whom we are trying to do in clay. She moves like you, with your forceful gentleness. It is a gracious touch of camaraderie between us. I wish for you—here. But if you won't come,—I will. Tu es adorable dans tes lettres, Charmeuse, mais je te veux toi-même. Je suis plus que difficile à satisfaire. Tu me dis "Hurry up" et cela me fait mal—car je suis prisonnier pour quelques jours encore. Regards toi bien dans ta glace et donnes toi un cher sourire pour moi. Que ta bouche et tes beaux yeux poetiques respondent à ton image avec toute la caresse de ton charme! Patience, chere Cassandre, dans deux semaines ton miroir me jalouera!

And now I am a different person, Judy, I only speak English and am quite correct and stiff and stupid. Only, if you have other lovers, send them away, for I warn you I shall be a melodrama of jealousy. For who else windeth a circlet of stars round darkness? And who else

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putteth peacock feathers on dulness of a summer in America?

God guard the sky over your head, my wonderful starry-eyed Judith! Whenever I look up you are there and I must always be just your
Little boy friend,

JULIAN.

Her boy Julian had suddenly announced he was coming home. Miss Lucretia dreaded it almost as much as she longed for it. The habit of solitary sacrifice had grown upon her. Should she know how to behave in the vivid light his coming would shed on the solemn procession of her days? And Judith was up at the thatched Rectory, to make it all as it used to be. The preparations for him had scarcely been completed, and to-day, yes, to-day, he would stand before sunset where the other Craigies had stood and breathe the atmosphere of his own people.

But would it mean that to him? Whether the years among his mother's people would send him back to her gladly reactive or but transiently loving, her heart misgave her. There was Judith, this time, of course. She seemed as positive a force as ever, so like and yet so unlike the madcap of childhood. Her secret hope built upon potentialities of the girl. But even Judith was part of the past he had spurned for his delirious future of travel and art. Dear Miss Lucretia wavered. She wanted the best for those she loved, but her conception of

the best for Julian, subject always she was sure to a clause of—"Thy will be done"—was so simple, so removed from the complex, high-strung, problematic young people she was most anxious to bless! Young people of the present who scorned axiomatic truth and were born explorers, out for new solutions of themselves, pushing their personal frontiers into the unknown.

For a week after his return Julian gave himself up to boyhood re-lived and made his aunt perfectly happy. If she questioned inwardly, she kept it from him. And if he deflected from every possible suggestion of his ultimate plans, he did it with an unconsciousness that seemed to include his own intention.

Naturally the two young people were together after their old established custom. The first morning Julian went up the path by the brook, Miss Lucretia said, as he left the room, "Going up to play with Judith, dear?" It was her old gentle way of watching over him, very sweet to the boy by association. It was the man now, who came back and kissed her good-bye.

"Yes, I have finished my letters. There is nothing more you want me for, is there?" he asked, imitating his boyhood justification,—then—"What time must I come home?"

She slipped across the room and set his chair back in its definite place.

"Dinner is at one, as usual," she reminded him.

"If they ask me, can I stay up there for dinner?" he begged, just as he used.

And she shook her head dubiously, adding, "If Reverdy asks you; otherwise I think you had better come home. It might not be convenient."

"But if it is perfectly convenient?" he teased.

And they both laughed and he kissed her again, remembering how he used to bribe Judith to get Reverdy to urge him, so Aunt Lucretia could be honestly convinced that he had been wanted.

"It is so jolly to be home!" he called back, waving his hand to her as he went.

Her boy was at home and happy. Miss Lucretia sat down, overcome by the answer to her prayers. He slept in the mahogany four-poster of sacred and memorable birth, he dined sitting beneath his grandfather's portrait. His step was like his father's in the hall. He clicked the latch exactly as his grandfather had, and his way of walking up the path to the house was just as all the Craigies had from the beginning. On Sunday he went to church with her and the brass tablets to the memory of those same ancestors cursed his meditations with their ugliness. Why tablets? Why not stained glass windows with lovely suggestiveness and intrinsic beauty? he wondered.

He very often forgot the sermon in pondering why ugliness or at least extreme barren plainness

and goodness wived in New England. He confided his puzzle to Judith one Monday, who dismissed it summarily by saying, "Space is the only place where one can really worship God. But don't tell Reverdy I said so. It would hurt him."

"You will not say it after you have seen the cathedrals," Julian promised. His nature was the more impressionable of the two at the time, more responsive to the sensuous imagination of religion.

"But don't you find yourself thinking of them, instead of God?" she asked.

He tried to explain to her the rapture of the Mass, the unearthly transient taste of the heavenly elements, mystically transfused.

"But is it real? Do you 'go out and fight Phillip' afterward?" she urged. "Even in this exquisite service of Reverdy's I feel surfeited, I have no desire to do anything but enjoy. I have changed about religion. I think worship ought to be force-creating, not enervating."

He made a plea for the soul's conscious weakness before the sustaining sufficiency of God. She did not share it. Ah, there was the difference between them. She was a Puritan, a moralist, and he that doubly difficult entity, sensuous of nature, an idealist, by temperament a Catholic. He could have left aside his intellect while he worshipped,—she would have to relate both operations.

And so June came along down the mountain

path through the ferns, where the brook led the way, clamorous, and the village became a rose jar of perfumes. Everywhere the creamy whiteness of the roses, the gipsy yellow, the dawn-coloured and winey red sweetness accosted them. No house but was wreathed in its ramblers. No door-yard however humble without its tangle of thorn and colour. Just outside Julian's window was the identical sweet-briar, insistent after rain, that recalled his earliest childhood, faintly beckoning from the past like pale hands.

The Inn, on the opposite hillside from the rectory and much frequented by summer people, had filled to overflowing. Every cottage was sharing the rose season with guests. And every day and often each day, strangers stopped to gaze in at the old Craigie place or venture to ask permission to walk in its rose gardens,

“A place of splendid summer and perfume and pride”—

Surely Julian must love this home of his and its proprietorship inherited of generations. What future could compare, for him, with marrying and going on here, or for Judith, either? Their children would play at the old games, be punished for the same old offences, and God would keep his promise from generation unto generation.

Still the way was not free of misgiving, for Julian was different,—in spite of his loving cere-

monies with her. She felt he was making something up to her, as when a child he had been extra good after doing something forbidden.

He was capable of deep absorption, forgot his dinner hour altogether, symptoms Miss Lucretia had learned to fear as the fatal signs of genius. Sometimes he approached the tyrannical with Judith. Once she heard him say with a sigh that stayed in her heart for hours—"What would I give to model you!" And the girl's instant warning, "Hush, don't say it aloud!" had been to spare her. She could not tell, watch as she might, whether his moods were accounted for by his feeling for Judith, or he suffered from a mood of creation, non-creative. If he had started on his father's career she could not doubt that this was so. She had seen it and known it too well. She surmised that Judith was at fault. Suddenly Julian went off to town for a week. It was but natural he should want to see many congenial friends, yet—if he was in love with Judith, if this restlessness was caused by her, why should he leave her? She was glad she had put away the little parian Clytie where no suggestion of the art she dreaded could accost him.

Who could have been cruel enough to tell her that already he was off for the necessary implements to do a Judith on the sly?

CHAPTER IX

MISS LUCRETIA'S BALL

SUMMER had dipped toward ripening and down at the Inn they were dancing to-night, all of them young and gay. All night long Miss Lucretia Craigie had sat in a low chair by her open window, listening across the moon-struck fields between, hearing the steady pulse of the orchestra as it accented the recurring rhythm for the dancers. The moon slipped away and the night relaxed, grew sweeter about her; still she sat on. Was it a watch with youth and its romance? Was it sheer romance? She merely yielded to the impulse, sitting on until a cock and then another crowed somewhere off in the distance at the first hint of dawn over the eastern hills. The music did not fail. She waited until it died; hearing no more, went quietly to bed, just as the first workmen with their pails started across the fields. Still Julian had not come in. She wondered vaguely and fell asleep.

When the first birds were awaking, Julian had

brought Judith safely back to the Rectory, said good night, but had not gone away.

They had never danced together since they were grown up until to-night. It had been intoxication for both.

How the birds sang now! In loops of gladness that swept round them from tree to tree, singing of hope and rash exultation of Nature and dawn.

Instinctively they turned from the door and went a few steps into the garden. One unfamiliar note rose clear above the rest.

"The Pope's Angel," whispered Julian; "come and find him."

"It is Reverdy's thrush. How did it know its way here?" Judith replied.

The chorus rose and swam and rose again higher than before with an undulating movement like some palpitant beat of Nature's eternal hidden measure.

"Shall I come up about noon?" he asked, waiting to be urged, as when he was a lad.

"All right. Good night," she assented, unexpectant of what was coming.

But he stood very near her now.

"Sweet dreams!" she cried, hating herself for her suspicion of him.

"Give me lief to dream of you?"

"Dare you!" she mocked, glad of the lighter tone.

Then suddenly his hands were on her shoulders.

"Kiss me good night," he demanded.

"I have grown up," she reminded him gravely, without shrinking.

"I know you have grown up. I knew it without you telling me."

"I supposed so," she admitted.

"It hurts, does it not?"

"Not everybody, probably."

"You know I grew up once myself," he reminded her, "and I have absolute faith in the various resources of torture provided for the making of a spirit out of a woman."

"And of mere man?"

"Sheer devil, sometimes. Often."

A silence—the bird's cadence thrilling round them, snaring them into some tangled arabesque of beauty. Judith became unaccountably cold.

"I play fair. I warn you," he said. "I am going to kiss you."

"Why?"

"Because I never have since I wanted to, and I have wanted to ever since you would not let me and refused to play Cassandra with me. And you never would have let me until to-night."

"Why do you say until?"

"Because we know we belong to each other and I am going to marry you. This kiss is the first step in that heavenly direction."

"I am not going to marry any one, ever." There was no coquetry in her manner; it was a bare statement. That was what troubled him, not what she said.

"Women all say so — at first. Wait till I have kissed you!"

"And do they all change their minds afterward?"

How he prayed it was jealousy in her voice! The rose-scent came by them on an irresponsible little fluttering breeze. Over the east there was the presage of coming day every moment more significant.

"You will," he asserted.

"I shall not," she replied quietly. "No man has ever done that to me and I shall not marry. I hate it — all of it."

"Why?" he asked in turn.

"I have never known why. I do not know now. It is the same thing as worshipping in a church instead of out of doors, I suppose. It cramps me."

"But that is what women are made for, to love and marry." He smiled at her dilemma. He had felt it would not be easy to get near her. He had expected this, but not the swift glance of repulsion that crossed her face.

"Who says that is all we are for? Men?"

"All the world cries out of woman's noble duty to it."

"I know it. I have heard it before from lips that were not noble. I will give my whole life to the world, trying to help it and heal it. I will try to make a way out through the spirit, a free way. I won't be an animal, while I have a soul, and just eat and reproduce like the lowest forms of life."

"Then you no longer believe that God is love, Judy?"

Her eyes brimmed with sudden tears. "Not man's kind," she said slowly.

And then he conceived how serious a trouble it all was to her. "What have they been doing to you down in that filthy city?" he cried. "Oh, my beautiful brave-Goddess, who has disturbed your serenity? Judith la grande et belle! Judith la brave et douce! Judith l'adorable et adorée!"

She could not respond to him. Her heaviness of spirit clung to her. How could she tell him he had repeated Martin's justification for a tragedy, verbatim? How could she explain, when she did not understand herself, that she had seen the sickening side of animal passion in the court room, the vain helplessness of appetite in her sister Paula. She had got false impressions that she could only correct by living. She was at that white flame of her girlhood when to deny love seemed to consecrate her soul to the service of those who had not strength of will to do it for themselves. He had come too soon. He should have let her get her

balance after the shocks of her last year, of which, of course, he was ignorant.

He did not make the mistake of taking her lightly. He knew her as no trifler. If so resolute a spirit as hers was cowed, it must have suffered from no small cause. "Judy dear, please sit down and listen to me," he said solemnly; "I have got to talk to you at once. I know Reverdy is wiser than I, but perhaps he does not understand you as I do, and you have no mother to help us now." She still stood, undecided.

"Please, dear," he urged. "You know it is not given to me to understand you always, only on certain days. I hope this will prove to be one of them."

She sat down on a low stone bench among the other blooms of the morning, where Reverdy had first told them the story of Apollo, years ago, and where he read to himself the blessed "Imitation of Christ" whenever his heart grew hot with longing or his will lost submission toward "patience,—that customary cross."

Julian, half sitting, half kneeling, leaned against her; her hand in his, as Reverdy might have held it. He told her then, keeping nothing back, of the transition from boy to man, of the groping of adolescence—the miracle-working, hidden forces bearing him toward an appointed goal despite his own blindness.

He told her unreservedly all it had meant to him, all his hopes and dreams, all for her, with her, through her. He tried in his poor bungling way to show her what the one woman meant to a man in his crucial moments of decision as well as his subconscious habits. She must not be a little girl and shrink from reality any longer. The dignity of her calling was claiming her. He would be very gentle, as they went hand in hand into the grown-up mysteries together just as, in childhood, they had ventured the deeps of the pine wood. She must not be afraid,— they were meant for each other from the beginning. He would show her how sweet love was, how enthralling!

He ceased, and when she did not speak or move, reason forsook him. He cried out for her.

“Judith, you must love me! I am a man now, with every nerve tense for this that has happened to me. If you turn from me— oh, you do not know! Save me from myself! Keep me your own. There is more of my mother’s blood in me than of the Puritans. Let me love you and keep my passion holy. Oh, my God, I suffer!” he broke off — but he had not touched her.

She shivered terribly.

“Don’t, Julian. Can’t you understand? I love you as I always have, but I never want to marry any man. I want to be here with Reverdy. I don’t want any one else to make me lose my power

over myself. Why can't we go on as we are? We have been so perfectly happy that way all summer?"

"As friends?" His tone was incredulous.

"Why not?"

"Because, as a man who knew said, between a man and a woman hate, worship, love are possible — no friendship."

"I feel it for you."

"If that is all, then I am going to-morrow." He got up and stood before her. But even as he relinquished her hand, her thought was not for herself or him —

"Poor dear Miss Lucretia!" came pityingly from her. "You would not really, Julian, leave her like that? You are all she has."

"You are all I have."

"You will not be so cruel!"

"Not unless you are," doggedly.

"You have no right to lay such a burden on me. It is unjust. It is not playing fair."

But he was talking rapidly now without heeding her. "I shall go back at once to my mother's set in Rome. It does not matter now. They tell me I have it in me to be a great sculptor. I have kept it to myself, but I am to exhibit this year in the Autumn Salon at Paris. I shall care for nothing else now. You could have held me here. No one

else can. You do not care what becomes of me — so the sooner the better.”

His face had an expression she had never seen, drawn and unattractive, as if the animal latent in all of us was for the moment on top. She sat staring straight in front of her into the greyness of a murky morning, when he was again close to her.

“Judith, kiss me!”

And like their beloved Launcelot he,

“never within a yard of her bright sleeves, before,”

leaned down to her.

“If I were dead you would kiss me,” he insisted, “or if you were dead, I should be allowed to kiss you. If paradise and the angels were sure to make me forget you and I did not need this kiss, it would not be refused me, but because I am going away,— just because I am going to die alive inch by inch, daily, without you; going to cross a desperate, dangerous world alone, are you going to refuse me?”

She heard him faintly. Would he never stop?

“People kiss people when they are going to war with regiments behind them and bands and banners. They never need it half as much,— Judith—” he begged.

She had risen, but stood uncompliant, dazed.

“I am going away alone, forever, to death surely

'since we are all in a sense condamné, under indefinite reprieve'—"

"Call it parole—" she suggested, she did not know why.

"May I?"

But he would not argue. He knew her power there to worst him. The supreme man's argument was the only one he trusted in. He snatched too greedily at the hint of hope in her words, caught her to him. His kiss hurt her by its violence.

He was no longer the timid, reverent boy. She was no longer his Divinity. They were man and woman—the first perhaps—the last perhaps—after the fall. Soul, mind, sex flaring up unsuspected. They dropped apart mutually terrified.

"Now,—will you marry me?" he demanded, superb in his victory.

"Now I never will," she swore.

"Because I kissed you, first?"

"No, because I hate you."

"No, you love me. It begins like that."

"Not with me."

"You will change."

"I shall not."

"I shall wait until you do."

"You will die first."

"All right. You will have killed me."

He left her.

For both, the world had come to an end that night.

Henceforth Miss Lucretia's life excluded Judith. Had she no woman in her? demanded that outraged heart, twice torn for her boy and herself, and again for the honour of the Craigies from the beginning. Why should the love of Julian shock any girl? Was not she herself a modest woman, and had the love of such as Julian been offered her would she not have gone down on her knees and thanked heaven fasting?

Her own life had been sacrificed to duty. That had to be as it was. Judith had acted from caprice; inspired no doubt by some misbegotten, artificial prejudice derived from her contact with her silly sister Pauline. She persisted in regarding her as either a fool or a shrew. Julian had spared her all he could, but his face betrayed him, and even his aunt saw that he could not stay on after such an unequivocal refusal. Her own heart suddenly went wrong after his departure, obliging her to lie quite still in her great four-poster, forbidden to move, on possible penalty of her life. Still, she would not vary her monotonous days by admitting Judith, nor would she speak of the newspaper clipping that told her of Julian's unexpected success with his first statue offered the Salon, and accepted. Not a word from him had come as yet, and she

could only surmise his strong young torment baffled of its first great goal. She did not read her Bible much now, she only lay and fought it out for Julian with the Almighty. "I give in," she admitted, "but it must be at the price of his happiness." She almost expected the Almighty to take open notice of her conditional surrender. After a month or more of this, one night when her nurse was in her first sleep, Miss Lucretia raised herself on her elbow and looked about. There was no ensuing flutter round her heart. She listened, then put one foot to the floor; she waited for evil symptoms, but none came. She listened again, breathless, groped for her bedroom slippers; was determined. Julian she should never see again. But the house, her treasures on earth she would see. Perhaps the doctor did not know — or if he did, perhaps — anyway, she would go down once more through the home of the Craigies before she was carried down, unable to caution her bearers not to mar the hand-rail or the wall. To some extent curiosity had its grip on her. Was all kept as it always had been? The possibility that it was not, was tormenting. The night was warm. She drew her dressing gown close about her and relying on the moon for light passed cautiously but fearlessly out into the hall. The shadow of the trees outside danced before her as she went. The dining-room first; room of a million memories! She laid her

hand lovingly on the mahogany sideboard, boast of the family for generations. The blue china greeted her in regular groups immemorial stationed. Not a harp-backed chair was out of range. Nothing altered here.

In the living-room her knitting-bag was where she laid it. Before the portrait of Julian's father she paused; it made her shiver a little for old pain. On her desk lay the orderly piles of letters and household accounts, once so important. Yes, the familiar angles of each piece of furniture were unchanged, but to what purpose now? There was no one to care in future. It was *The End*, written here by her own hand.

The brass andirons, not as bright as tradition would have them, smote her for her inability to chide without self-betrayal to-morrow. She trembled slightly as she seated herself at her desk and once more looked deep into the face of Julian as it met her eyes with its pictured reserve.

This was their good-bye.

Her mouth hardened as she turned away and very softly opened the parlour door. The moon did not fall here. She found some matches and lit a candelabra, then another and another till the gilt-framed mirrors caught the festive spirit and repeated the flaring radiance, as if they too shared her wish to see the place once more as it looked in the old pomp of dead Craigies. Forgetting her

own frailty, she swiftly lighted them all: wedding candlesticks and prisméd candelabras set the room ablaze with rainbows; then, standing back, she saw, as if in a vision, the happy assemblage of her youth. Again she heard a voice only paradise could restore, saw herself a girl beloved and loving,— then — ah! whose is that shrunken form in a huddled dressing-gown confronting her? Those glassy eyes sunk in pallor? Who is spying on her as she takes leave of her past forever, at dead of night? Her hands went to her heart — Good God! was she already dead, and was this the prowling ghost of Lucretia Craigie facing her? With every drop of indomitable blood in her she nerved herself to extinguish those cruel tongues of flame and dragged herself to bed. The hand that pulled at the balustrade for help had on it a slender gold ring that had not been there when she went down.

There was no questioning next morning, though she scrutinised the face of her nurse with some anxiety, and but for that pale yellow circlet on her finger she could have believed she had dreamed.

That morning came her first letter from Julian, bearing the dreaded Roman postmark.

Forgive me, dearest, for not writing. This is the first morning I have felt a little like myself for so long! I have simply been wrecked on the face of the deep. Now I am better or worse. I keep going, going, going, working, working,—like Melancholia, to dull the

pain, but it comes back and overpowers me with great waves. I am calling on all the spirits of the air, beauty and poetry to make me resigned, to reassure me of the meaning and purpose of life. I hold poetry in my soul, my ideals, my love of art before me as an Ægis, and challenge the besetting powers of evil to come on and destroy me. I will fight—but I long to die.

My friend Hunniwell is here. He is a priest now and urges me to take orders. I wish Reverdy was within reach. You must not be ill over me. The thought of you, dear, is sanctuary to your Julian.

CHAPTER X

ACCORDING TO THEOCRITUS

THE summer passed; flying, dragging, broken-winged; as one chanced to feel about it. Pauline took up her campaign with a new astuteness on her return from Europe. If Reggy Pennell had decided to become of importance on his own account she also could meet him with the same weapons. She knew her own social power and rejoiced in it. If Reggy meant to figure as an entity in their mutual world, no one could contribute more strikingly to his success than herself. If her own charm had lost its first fascination for him, he could never resist her way of exerting it upon others. She had seen him turn back, dazzled by her intuition, while she made men play up for each other and rival their best records for wit and wisdom. Pauline was no fool, as Orren said. If Reggy had wearied of bloom and begun to live for fruit, her orchards were hung with incomparable inducements. No one entertained more of the artistic and literary foreigners of distinction, who at intervals invade the drawing-rooms

that are fortunate enough to attract them, and if Reggy had a fancy for diplomacy, her arm could still hold out to him what few, if any, of the women of his circle had to offer. She made no mistake in her selections. Mere celebrities would knock in vain at her exclusive doors. Her mind was made up for a brilliant and enviable winter. She was obstinate as all pretty women, and underneath her gift for her part lay a stubborn motive that rooted, as all pretty women's motives usually do, in the subjugation of a man.

And among the many varieties of men who came and went at the Braddish mansion that next season, smoking and epigrammising, flattering and being clever, was one Drake Heminway. The same of whom Reggy had spoken as having random political aspirations.

His tongue was a ready one, albeit caustic at times. He came because he found Judith had one to his liking, too. He found her devilish fascinating from her superb aloofness. He was a man of high breeding, with a classical taste rather unusual among Americans, reminiscent of his boyhood at Rugby, where his father had placed him after some prank that turned him out of school at home. To himself he admitted soon and openly that Theocritus had about sized it up when he wrote,
" Dame Goat pursues the clover, Grey Wolf doth Goat pursue —

The Stork pursues the plough; and I—O! I am wild for you!”

Other men were professedly in love with her, after her, bound to have her. There was Pennell, of course; too domesticated to be dangerous; and Ormsby, whose prosaic industry would never set her on fire, he was sure. There were others he felt less sure of, there might be a dark horse,—most women who seemed indifferent had a memory or a ghost or some toy they took to bed with them. So he watched them all, looked on; always talking and making paradoxes at the expense of every one else and all social conditions; always gay, always light of touch and responsive; one of Pauline's most valuable assets. Until one bright electric-lit evening on Broadway, right under a most unromantic dazzle of signs, while his taxi was held up for a crossing, it occurred to him that he wanted her for himself exclusively. Partly because the others plainly could not get her. Partly because, after the nature of man, he simply wanted her and so meant to have her. It also occurred to him, by malicious suggestion probably, that the others had not touched the spring that opened the secret drawer of her nature. Now, Heminway was not simple like Reggy Pennell. He was of that older school of the serpent; subtle and coiled. He was a discriminating tempter; a Mephistopheles to revise the jewel-song by inserting motor-cars. He

would never have offered red apples to a woman preferring diamonds. Nor, au contraire, was he now going to be so stupid as to offer diamonds where beauty of soul and character were so plainly the commodity in demand.

He read his lines perfectly and waited without nervousness for his cue. Up to Christmas he said nothing. Judith had given her word to try Society for one season, after which she was to be allowed a modified form of her proposed experiment for other girls. Pennell at work saw less of her, but thought more. She did as she was bid, went and came, danced and ate with a patience that would have been touching if it had not hinted at obstinacy as tenacious as Paula's own. What Reverdy asked of her she would do. That was all Pauline could get out of her. Sometimes she half thought Judith might be getting fond of Reggy. That was a thought that kept her awake and made her read in bed until her eyes looked red next day.

Seeking Judith out one night after a gay dinner followed by informal music, Heminway reasoned that the curtain was up for his play. The self-absorbed crowd, the be-flowered rooms, the after-dinner ease occurred to him as conducive to his desired effect. Where were they two likely to be thrown together in so satisfactory a privacy?

She was sitting down, one of a group of three, in a quiet corner. Pennell would have known from

her face that she was listening to "the Voices" within, not hearing much that was being said by those near her. Her mouth in repose was infinitely sad. Heminway seated himself beside her. He was a distinguished looking man. One noticed him. His evening clothes never levelled him. He wore them with individuality.

"Tired?" he asked quietly.

Now why that one little word undoes a woman, no one of them can tell. But asked in the right tone of sophisticated simplicity, it has a spell. If you do not believe it, try it yourself some time.

She looked up at him wonderingly, sadly he thought. Her eyes were clear, but deep beyond sounding by his own.

"If I could only put you in my sister's garden, down South, and read you some of the great restful poets"—he sighed. "This is not your world. Does no one see it, but me?"

"Everybody is tired at the height of the season," she said, as if not sure she cared for this new intimacy his tone implied.

The other two men, seeing her taken from them, moved away. Heminway turned his back on the room.

"It is killing you. You are dying, wasting of starvation and no one sees it. And if a man only dared to offer to help — if, with all purity of purpose, a man could be something of encourage-

ment to life"—he paused, "this destruction of a rare soul, when one is impotent to arrest it, is too awful!" He had spoken in a matter of fact way; almost indifferently. Any one glancing toward them would have been baffled.

Judith turned to him and looked steadily into his eyes. He kept them cool and clear for her scrutiny.

"You are right," she said simply; "something is dying in me."

"Don't let it! Don't!" he begged.

"What can I do? I won't be coerced and I live beset. No one but my brother understands."

"Blessed-brother! So many dear women go under because they have no one who understands."

"I shall never be one of them. I know what I want and I am only waiting."

"What do you want?" There was a lover, then, in the background. To efface him was going to be the comedy, like so many others he had played before.

He was unprepared for her next reply.

"I want to get to work. The suffering, the ignorance, the waste, the false weights sicken me. I want to help."

"False weights?" He was curious at once.

"You know what I mean,—the not playing fair. It is the women's fault. Men have worked to give them everything and trusted them. And they

have betrayed the trust. I want to begin to set it right."

"What is preventing you?"

"I promised to do this—for one season. It breaks my heart."

"I knew it." He did not move. He put that into his voice which made it a support.

"How?"

"You are so sad, so tired of keeping up the farce. And most girls cannot breathe out of it. You are the only one I ever saw who had any real idea of what living means."

"If I were a man"—

"Men get just as tired:—just as weary to death of it all. One longs not to make believe any more, to be oneself, if one still has a Self,—or to meet a real woman who is Herself."

"Do men ever feel like that, truly? Pauline says men only like amusing women."

"We know that we can jest—we know that we can smile,
But there's a something in this breast—"

he quoted aptly.

She caught up the poem and finished it. She looked at him, then, startled, as if he was some one she had never seen before. "And to think I should never have known you at all, but for this party!" she said slowly. "I never should have

set you apart from the others. And you do begin to rest me."

"It does bring rest to get down to certainties."

"It is wonderful," she repeated to herself, then wistfully, "Mr. Heminway, will you always be like this to me, now?"

"If you want me. I am afraid I am an insincere beggar with 'tout le monde,' but I swear I do think you need a friend."

"I have never found one here. I need one sadly. I have not a single one, and I never expected to find one."

"Perhaps we need each other. Could a man help in your plans?"

"Tremendously."

"How?"

"If you will not think it too personal, I will explain to you. When I was sixteen my brother Reverdy gave me to Pauline. And Pauline finds me just in the way, and so she is trying to give me to any man who wants me, according to convention. Neither of them will let me live alone with a chaperone and do what I want with my life, although my ambition is not selfish or wrong. They think it would reflect on Paula as a sister, I suppose, and people would criticise her. So I am obliged to finish out this year in the midst of disgusting offers of marriage forced upon me on all

sides and Paula's disapproval because I do not accept 'the natural arrangement for a woman's destiny.' Even my brother thinks I am passing through a temporary crisis and hopes I will fall into the trap happily at last. So if I had a friend I could trust, it would help me wait until my year is up."

"Will you let him try?"

"If he would."

"He will. He wants to. He wants it more than he usually wants anything."

"Strictly as my friend?"

"Yes. I will play fair with you, Miss Judith; as your friend, your brother, your husband even; anything you prefer." He was dispassionate. He gave her no excuse for shrinking.

"It would have to be as my friend. I do not want to marry."

"No. I never have."

"I am quite independent. I shall never have to."

"No unmarried woman can be quite independent. Marriage is the only way she can pursue any unusual career to advantage. It sets her free from a thousand hampering drawbacks."

"But it takes away her freedom!"

"It never would with me. My idea is hand-in-hand. Satisfy convention outwardly and we could live as we pleased, as friends who respected each

other's individuality and loved our work." As she did not repudiate him, he went on quietly, "You know how I have felt about you, ever since I first saw you at the 'Music Master,' I believe. It has been the secret of Polichinel."

"But there would be things"—she smiled adorably at him, but without coquetry—"You would have to kiss me, would you not? At least, before people?"

"Even that could be arranged, I imagine," he said. "And if you changed in your feeling afterward"—he stooped and gave her fingers the lightest of caresses, without raising his eyes—"I should be yours, to command, always. We could begin at once, you know. You would not have to wait and drag out this long winter. If I am not mistaken you do like me a little better than the rest of the pack who are after you."

"I do. Or else I dislike them enough to want to get out of their reach forever. That is just the trouble. Would it be fair to you? No, I am sure it would not."

"Perfectly, if we understood our situation clearly from the start."

"But suppose you grew to care about some sweet ordinary sort of a girl?"

"I should not while I was near you. You and your ideals would absorb me."

They were interrupted here. She had not re-

fused to consider it,—if he agreed it was fair to him. Oh, where was Orren Kerr to save her now?

Heminway had made up his mind. That is he had got up his blood. He told himself she should never get away from him. He was in for a run. He would not confess even to himself he might be riding for a fall. It was Heminway the politician, aggressive, alert, unscrupulous, astute, from that night on.

To Judith from precisely that point he became a temptation from a diversion. She was familiar with his story. It was not a pleasant one to women. She felt now how unfairly he had been treated by the gossips; was for championing him in secret if not openly. His music, those moods he played other women into and himself out of at their expense, would have left him harmless to her. The intimate messages his talented eyes sent to others equally expectant might have excited her but would have been harmless of permanent effect. It was not until he said simply, "You need a friend, let me be that to you," that she saw him as a substitute for Reverdy, a companion for her own loneliness and way out from the uncongenial situation in which they all found themselves involved.

A girl's heart is unlike anything else the Lord ever made and no two are alike. Nothing ever changes it but experience. That may transform it in a flash or after a drama of costly mistakes. If

Julian had walked with a "lover's staff" of hope, keeping near at hand, or if Miss Lucretia Craigie had been enough of a strategist to hold Judith close to her, and thus to him, the simple unfolding of her nature might have progressed in oldest of old ways. As it was, he had ranged himself with the united foe, and she was at odds with every element of her life. What could be more futile than hanging round the marriage market when one did not wish to sell one's wares? Reverdy's yielding to Pauline in this respect of enforced experience in society was the only instance where he had ever failed her. She knew perfectly their shamelessly open hope for her acceptance of Peter Ormsby. She could scarcely treat him decently as a result. If a young girl has no sentiment for a man, his for her is obnoxious beyond compare. His feeling for her seems to implicate her in an equally indelicate attitude. The way her poor swain looked at her turned Judith hot and cold. And when he made love to her, as he did on all possible occasions, she only longed for the wishing-carpet of the fairy-tales to lift her miles away.

The life Pauline planned for her seemed to be a sort of endless ride in a closed limousine. And she, Judy, was wild to get out where people were, to be one of the common crowd that walked and felt and got things at first hand, instead of being served with sold storage emotions at theatres and in ball

rooms. She could not be a fool either, for here was Mr. Heminway—"The Heminway"—she often heard him called, who shared her longing for reality. He was different, older by a year than Reverdy, too. He was splendid. She was proud of his friendship. He did not laugh at her or disapprove of her. He was on her side. He convinced her he would play fair, with any one and at all times. She let herself dwell on his sympathy with her plans more than she was ever conscious of having thought of any one man in all her life before. He was strangely convincing, she felt the strength of ten with him at her elbow. Not even Paula could ever interfere with her if she married a man like that! It was characteristic of her that she sealed her growing relation with him so tightly, that her sister had no notion there was anything she did not penetrate, and in pressing Peter Ormsby did the greatest favour possible for his rival. Julian's revelation of a man's desire for a woman still scorched her memory, too. Mr. Heminway was too old for such things. And the more the older man saw of Judith the more he saw deeper than the others and liked what he saw; showed her so. Yet the more reserved his manner with her became the more his heart cried out with his favourite Greek—

No other maiden escapes Love! nor shalt thou escape
him!

He did not go on with the passage and add even to himself —

But I fear if I let thee go, a worser man will have thee.

Perhaps in his new humility just now he did not know "a worser." At first they met constantly in society without reference to the subject of their mutual relation. He gave her time, was all discretion, talked to her of topics that flattered her understanding and urged her quick sympathy. Then suddenly he was obliged to go South with his only sister, again ordered back to prolong extinction in endless sunshine. It was a dreary leave-taking, though groups of friends who had hoped her cure permanently established, were at the station to make the parting less final. The invalid and her nurse were less depressed than the grim brother, whose furred shoulders caught the eye of every woman as he came and went, attending himself to each least item of comfort. Pauline was belated and ran down the platform only a few minutes before the train started. Judith with less colour than formerly, attached herself to one of the little groups inside, until the moment for leaving. She had scarcely thought Mr. Heminway noticed her being there, in his preoccupation. She watched him silently. Ah, he was that truest of all things, a Brother! He too had that most lovely quality unlike any other in

the world. A man who was a Brother, one could trust as a friend,— even more. It started her imagination off on a train of blessed memories where Reverdy always led the way. Judith was despondent and disillusionised this morning after a trying interview with Pauline on the detested subject of her suitors. It was perfectly plain that nobody but herself took the compact for next year as more than a joke. She had overheard Pauline assure Peter Ormsby to that effect and in the talk that followed she realised that her own voice was not to count. She was too young to know what she wanted, Paula said; she was like all young girls on fire to save the world but she would out-live all that,— young girls always did,— and at any cost to herself Pauline was determined to save her from making a blunder at the outset. She saw that she was really in Pauline's hands to be moulded into a married nonentity at the earliest possible date. What if Paula knew? Suppose it should turn out that all desire to help others died in her? How was she to save herself from the drugging of all her highest visions? It was disconcerting to be so overwhelmed by discouragement and put in the wrong. She was thinking of all this as she longed to say some warm word of sympathy to the man who alone had proved a friend. But what could she hope to do for him? In his new anxiety he had probably forgotten about her and their strangely

intimate talk together. Now she was losing him, she found she had counted upon him. The sight of him was exhilaration. He was her friend always, more hers than the rest: he had said so in a way that won her belief. She was moved by the recollection of his unexpected offer to stand by her, to give her the strength that was so apparently his to give. So when he said rather breathlessly, catching her hand in the semi-darkness of the narrow corridor, during the confusion of actual departure —

“If there was a woman who needed a man who would play fair” —

She had astonished herself by her instant reply —
“If there was a man,— that friend I saw once” —

He still held her hand. One swift searching glance before them,— already the train had begun to tremble toward flight —

“Good-bye,” she cried, panic-stricken.

“That word is over between us,” he said quietly. She turned from him just in time to get off, the very last one as the train moved away.

His parting glance she carried across her eyes interminably. Well, why not? He said himself it would be fair, if they both understood, and he was old enough to be sure of himself. No one could taunt him with being “too young for any sense” about anything! It would be as near going back to her life with Reverdy as anything she could

hope for, probably. Nothing could have impressed her as just this morning's sight of him with his frail sister. She might be too young to be a judge of anything else but she felt sure she did know a brother when she saw one.

"Heminway? Did you say Heminway?" Reggy Pennell asked incredulously.

"Heminway," Paula repeated happily.

"Not Drake Heminway?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, my God!"

"Reggy, please do not swear before me. It is shocking how the habit is growing on you. Profanity indicates paucity of resource, too."

"I only wish I had never sworn before. It is so expressionless in this crisis for what I want to say. If I swore by mine, and yours, and Heminway's, and every man's,—it would not begin to do it!"

"Isn't it a wonderful way to have it all turn out?"

"I should say it was."

"We were simply dazed, Ferd and I."

"Then it was not your doing?"

"No, not in the least."

"Who did it?"

"Ask them."

"I would have sworn he could not get her at the

point of the pistol," Pennell said thoughtfully. "Women are rakes after all, I make no exceptions in future. She had better have taken me!"

"If you know any reason against—" she began.

"I? Oh, far from it! Drake is rich enough to marry any Saint or Vestal."

"I thought you would be delighted."

"If it were anybody but Heminway," he repeated. But Paula thought it would not matter who it was. It was the downfall of Judith that really upset him.

"If he were here—" began Reggy.

"It is just his being gone that lets us out so beautifully," she cried. "Really, you are not any more surprised than I am. They have been engaged less than a month and they want to be married as soon as he comes North. It is to be a hurried wedding, and that is lucky too, for I should expect Judy to do something outrageous."

"What more outrageous could she do?"

"Not marry at all. You know she is queer about men."

"She is honest, you mean."

"Here is Drake Heminway," Paula went on confidently, "a man in her own set, rich, conventional, older, everything most desirable, and the very last person I should have dared to pray for her."

"How did it really come about, Paula?"

Paula flung open her hands. "I can never guess. It is simply too good to be true; like a

dividend one had no hope of, even if one was in debt."

"The less they see of each other the better, if you want it to come off," he warned.

"That is why I give thanks at his being detained," Pauline confessed. "Judith and he are about as likely to survive an engagement intimacy, as Alfred de Musset and Mrs. Livermore! Left alone she will idealise him. That is her way. And he will hanker for her."

"So much the worse."

"Once married — of course he is crazy about her, we all saw that, but most men are about any handsome woman. She will have to adapt herself and take up the burden, that is all."

"She never will, and you know it," Pennell said rudely.

"Judith's principles are of iron," began Pauline.

"You mean the possibilities of her incongruous self will be hidden behind the Heminway millions," thought Reggy Pennell, but aloud he said — "You won't let her marry him without giving her a little, — well, an idea of what she is letting herself in for?" he felt it was not his place. But a vision of Judith smote him to utterance.

"He will know how to win her over. That is not so hard as you may think," she said soothingly. So Pauline grew younger every hour, did her

hair more youthfully, gave more ambitious parties, was more amusing, and Pennell watching her, realised how much of a child she was to have the epoch-making Judith on her graceful conscience, and despised himself for sinking back into his old place at her side, with a new consciousness of something more tense and less innocent than characterised their intimacy before Judith had gone the way of all women before his eyes.

Meanwhile Judith was very sweet and grave and Heminway loafed away his time, writing her regularly and being charming as he was accustomed to being on paper with many sorts of women; getting just the proper note to accord with her desire to find in him the friend and ally, he hid the dazzled male on the threshold of a votive temple. No doubt he was crazy for her. He had been for others, before. He had got to marry this girl to get her. This was the difference. Usually his hottest affairs had been with married women; at least when he began with them. From the first, his letters to Judith had an unvarying signature — “Zum befehl.” Her first letter to him after their formal betrothal, had rather staggered him.

“How did you know Pompilia was dying? No one else did—”

“Who was Pompilia?” he asked every one he met, associating the name with some Roman Em-

peror, acquitting Browning until his sister's copy enlightened him. And again she wrote —

“Your calm voice, offering me escape, pursues me like the Hound of Heaven.”

And in another letter, she told him —

How scant in souls the world can be! If I had not met you, all summer would have been wasted. And now we can begin right away, at Easter, with the life that worsted Death for our example.

She began hers to him “Dear, my best Friend.” And he ventured — “My dearest Lady,” or even “My very dearest Lady,” testing her. There was nothing hysterical in her, he decided; frank, free, unafraid, he felt she wholly trusted him.

She wrote him once.

“I prayed for you. You pray for me too, do you not? The only other boy friend I ever had, always did, against the sin that doth most easily beset us. What is yours? Mine is pride, and feeling I know better than others what is right, Sister Paula says.”

On sides like this Heminway's imagination had had scant training. He sent her letters blurred with the vivid bloom of the tropic winter, letters unlike hers, but full of her plans, her work, her freedom, her joy, omitting all personal claim or intrusion upon her life, but always assuring her of his profound intention of sharing it with her.

He grew nervous as the time shortened between them.

“All I ask of you is to play fair,”

she wrote him in her last letter.

And his reply had been a telegram —

“If she think not well of me,
What care I how fair she be.”

If it was equivocal, would she know it?

He got back to town one raw cold morning at the homeless hour, too late to go to bed and too early to be anywhere else. He could not telephone to the Braddish household for several hours. He stopped at his club, and wrote a line to be given Judith with a box of orange and tangerine flowers his sister had sent. No one knew he was back. He was restive under the silly delay. Oh, yes, Theocritus knew; he was “wild for her,” or was it curiosity?

About eleven he called her up, amused at his own impatience. Of course she would put him off till tea time, but he wanted to hear how she did it. To his astonishment she bade him come at once.

It was one of the unforgettable hours of his life. He never lost the memory of that drawing-room, cheerless in its morning disuse, as he waited, keen for her entrance and reception of him as her accepted Lover.

He heard the man announce him above, and then

down she came to him, gallantly, gladly, colours flying as for a holiday. It was an eager welcome.

"Dear, my Friend!" she cried, as they clasped hands.

"My very dearest Lady," he responded, to give her time.

"How splendid you have been to me!" she praised.

"I hope I shall always be. I want to be," he protested, ashamed of his real embarrassment.

"I do so hate to have to marry you,— but it is the only way we can carry out our plans together, isn't it?" she commiserated, with heightened colour.

"I am afraid it is," he admitted, smiling.

"And you don't feel it is asking too terribly much of you?"

"I have not felt that way."

Was she a supreme coquette, born so, like her sister, Mrs. Braddish? Surely her sister must have disillusionised her pretty thoroughly? Surely the child could not suppose —

"Do come up in the library and get everything settled," she urged, breaking in on his reflection. "Could we please be married as soon as possible? Would you mind, I mean, if it is very soon, almost immediately?"

"The sooner the better for me." He was using some self-control now. But he did not offer to

touch her. Suddenly to his surprise, she came closer to him and put her hand back into his.

"I do mean to play fair," she said, turning her radiant cheek to him like an obedient child. "You may kiss me if you want to,— just where Reverdy does,— as my friend."

Heminway winced. He felt defrauded. What creature could be base enough to betray a trust like hers? The finest in him asserted itself as he touched her, reverently, as her own brother might.

He had degenerated. He admitted it and laid the blame where it belonged, to his intercourse with Mrs. Dives and the loose, careless women of her set and his. Women who did their utmost to intoxicate men like him and send them away to sate their appetites at coarser tables less luxuriously spread. Was it too late to retrieve himself? Was this dear child to give the lie to all past experience, to a man of the world like himself? Was he to be deluded into a philanthropic partnership instead of a transient love-madness, because he could not hurt a child?

"What is the matter with me?" he asked himself angrily. And the face in the glass reflected nothing. So Judith in ignorance, Paula in triumph, and Drake Heminway with motives least known to himself, prepared the tragic indecency of another victim led to the sacred altar of ignorant matrimony.

CHAPTER XI

THE LEASH STRAINS

THOSE who looked on expecting a sensational turn in the events following the wake of the Heminways' marriage were obliged to divert their appetites for scandal elsewhere. Conjecture was unsatisfied. Even Pauline Braddish stopped wondering after a time; except occasionally. Reggy Pennell, after his first outraged explosion, became silent. Any spectacle would have been welcomed by his inward "Amen." Any eruption however volcanic would have been less surprising to the immediate family than the perfectly suave decorum with which life appeared to proceed. They had all been prepared for the worst and most melodramatic,—even to Judith in flight on her wedding night,—even to Heminway preposterously wronged and aggressively aggrieved, clamouring for restitution from those who should have foreseen, and had declined to avert. They expected tragedy. Comedy was inevitable in such a match. It seemed to be mere realism they were getting. Without this clue they were baffled.

There was something in the poise of Drake Hem-

inway's head, with its auburn hair parted full on his broad temples, that disarmed the mere possibility of questioning. He was not a man to prod. His individuality partook of the way he carried his shoulders, repelling critical approach on the part of outsiders. But for just what did happen, no one was prepared, though of just what had happened no one but the Heminways themselves it seemed would ever be aware.

They had gone away on no conventional honeymoon of mutual inspection, but even this item had been allowed to escape public detection. Judith had refused the suggestion of Bermuda or Italy with something of impatience, if not terror, he thought. He had fallen in with her preference, remarking casually, "You must never tell posterity you were not given the chance,—that would make me out such a clown." Indeed he never forgot, that in the afterwards of later retrospection, she must be able to measure and appreciate him by the standard that was to be hers. "When you get to know more than you do now about men and the world, I want you to always feel that Drake was the real thing," he told her once. Her extreme youth restrained him. So all that first summer they had been in town; all the next winter, until spring returning began to work havoc in his blood. He speculated much then on his staying power, and whether to live in the house with a Social

Vestal was a possible antidote for a secret passion that gnawed like a wharf rat. If she was not actually his, at least she was not another's and never could be. He had that. He had the sole right also of nearness and protection; the joy of watching her and watching over her. This was not so very much to Drake Heminway, after all. He read Pauline's curiosity perfectly and rebuffed it. He estimated with a nicety the bets rife at his clubs and was irreproachably serene. His supreme preoccupation was his desire to defend her from the first light breath of criticism. Reverdy was entirely on his side, and though they had said little after the habit of men, he knew that Reverdy, too, felt that in the end she would of course give him that unpromised land,— so infinitely to be earned,

“and droop at last into his arms.”

It might happen any hour. The uncertainty was intoxicating to him.

Judith herself was radiant. For the first months she had given herself up to the joy of her big house and been frankly expansive in her delight at being out from under the Braddish surveillance. Drake followed her about, carrying out her wishes, helping, suggesting, effacing himself as a husband, and for the first time in his life really interested in “something not himself, that made for righteousness.”

It was so original, so droll! How long it could go on he did not care to speculate. It was a novel intrigue for him. It was worth while to have the right to live beside this adorable if super-moral Being, who walked so securely where she would, even amid man's hottest passions, and over his inherited taken-for-granted prerogatives.

He knew how craters felt when not in eruption, most of the time, then. He was sure of her fair play. She would preserve his dignity and her own as one. That was Judith, the golden-haired, intolerant Bigot that ruled him!

So he lent himself to her every experiment, saving her countless failures through mistakes in judgment; talked over perplexing cases with her where she got beyond her depth in the psychology of men and women, and would have drowned but for his better understanding. He supplied unlimited money for the running of her Homes, and the Clubs she gathered together, and strangely, he felt more alive than he had for years, though he denied himself all relations with other women, deserting his old inner circles in society, houses where he had been a welcome habitué for years. To serve this child, who gave herself utterly to her chosen work, he was quite forgetting the easy satisfactions of pleasure as he had always known it. The little fires of transient desire that his friends lit at random, and danced round like so many midges of a

summer evening, were ignominious beside the steady burning flame of principle by which her life was fed. She awed him. Yes she did. And he found it a great experience, worth the effort it cost him to keep his lower nature under lest his Idol be profaned by him. He had never had a religion. Judith was becoming one to him. Mentally he was on his knees before her. Morally he did not know much definitely about himself, but he "felt corking all the time," and "tremendously fit" for work. His eyes had a lustre unseen in them before. His colour was fine as when he had pulled in a winning eight. Noting it, Pauline opened her lips as if to mock,—then shut them without speaking.

Sometimes Judith was away from their own house for several days, living in the poorest lodging houses, seeking for girls sick and discouraged and out of work; the desperate, those so exposed to the sin most easily besetting. The two older women who were in charge of her homes were college graduates and often shook their heads over her lack of training and method, but Drake would not have her interfered with. She manipulated her Clubs herself, with him at her elbow.

Her talks with the girls became noised abroad, though never an outsider was allowed to hear her. Gradually her influence spread. She talked to women, other communities, in settlements, in noon-

day meetings: twice in prisons. Her sweet fond voice and shining personality carried conviction and hope. She was sought for in higher circles, for encouragement of rich and restless women, who would have honoured her at their banquets and mass meetings, had she not steadily declined. The papers now spoke openly of Heminway's strong lead for the Mayoralty. The people were with the husband of the lovely girl Samaritan.

If ever there had been a marriage destined to black failure, it was this one, yet it was turning out to the power and the glory, in spite of all prognostications. Those nearest marvelled. Pauline wavered between being proud and ashamed of her sister. The devotion of each of this strange pair for the other was unassailable. Judith had no lover, nor had she as yet a child. It was terribly exasperating in its complexity to Pauline, and she could not talk about it with any one, which made it worse, as every woman knows.

Heminway had never heard Judith speak to her girls until one evening in April when he came for her with the car too early, and so was permitted to wait for her in an adjoining room with the door open, where she could not see him or be distracted by knowing he was there. He had never imagined her power over these prodigal daughters of the town.

There she stood before them, a fearless child, peer-

less, unconscious,—wearing her rough grey street suit with no ornament but a knot of violets, brought her by the sister of a street flower-vender at a near corner. And they who sat before her,—his eye swept them familiarly but not with contempt, as it might not so very long ago. For her sake they too were women. He felt sure that one of her holds over them was just the fact of her being—“such a swell”—as one girl had expressed it. The very gulf between them heightened her power. He remembered how a certain “tough,” converted into a Settlement assistant, had said warningly, “Don’t you never let her come down here alone at night, Sir. She’d git insulted somethin’ fierce. The nurses and Settlement ladies is all safe enough. They don’t look like Mrs. Heminway does. But she’d git into trouble. I put you wise for her sake. It’ll be ‘good night’ if she ever does git loose alone!” This affair to-night was a sort of initiation for new girls into the aims and love of their previously enlisted sisters. It was concluding with an informal talk in which Judith was instilling her dearest ideals for them.

“To share—” he heard her say,—“that is all there is to it. That is being a missionary just as much as being called one and paid a salary. The people who give their whole lives to it publicly do no more than that. And to share is to take as well as to give; to accept what is given to us by those

who love us, or what they have given up for us. And that, you see, is part of our gift back to them. We need what others can be to us more than anything they can give us, and others need us more than our gifts. It is harder to be a real friend than to give everything we possess. Make a friend of every man you know! Man is not an enemy. There is nothing bad enough or good enough to say of them. You have often said to me that all men were brutes, but "men are to be pitied," too. They have their own fight and they would be splendid if you would make them so. The relations of all men and women must be free, frank and friendly, not poisoned, hidden and darkened. Don't forget that woman's way out is through her spirit. Friendship and ideal love are like worship, an impulse of the spirit for higher spirit. Nothing removes two souls like touch if it is not consecrated. Where the physical is ignoble it degrades us, but true marriage is the visible sign of a wonder of God, who is Love in us. In this matter, most of all, give no false weights to your conscience. Christ is conscience in each of us. Don't lie to yourselves. Nothing is true but the best. Evil only is false. Believe it and act on it. It is for girls like us to save not only ourselves and our city but the men. Lust exhausts itself and its victim quickly, and is hungry for new blood. Passion says, "My God! Is *that all* it is?"

Love, beating its breast with downcast eyes, cries, "My God, is it *all that?*"

When her voice ceased, Heminway went out to the car. He was deeply perplexed. Where did the child get her emotional power? And had she, as Chesterton said of Shaw, started back from the grave to the cradle. How did she ever formulate such an odd budget of wisdom?

Driving home, she was eagerly laying new tangles before him for his consideration.

"Wait a minute," he inserted, "I want to say first, that you are the supreme paradox. I can never make one half so radical. Your Creator has outdone me."

"If you do not call me a parasite, that is all I ask," she agreed hurriedly, to get to her problem.

"Now listen, Drake,—there's a lamb,—she says, no man has ever tempted her before. She insists that it is not a love of pleasure, or any vicious inclination that tripped her, but that this one man, out of all the world, is to blame," Judith explained.

"They all have a first, do they not?"

"If we could only make it the last," she sighed wistfully.

"I am not half so down on her class as the White Tyrant higher up," he urged, trying to cheer her.

Again she sighed.

"Tired?" he asked in his old loving way.

"A little," she confessed. "It is such a big world, Drake."

He saw she was disheartened for some reason and ached to comfort her.

"This very girl has been my strongest helper all along," Judith reverted; "it means more to have her get under the spell than another. She says she does not know why, but she has to go where she knows she will meet him, even if she has put every obstacle she knows in her own way." Still Drake was wise and held his peace. Perhaps Nature was going to be kind to him and teach her the great lesson without any prompting from him.

"Drake," she asked suddenly, sitting up straight, all trace of fatigue lost—"what about your cousin Mary's marriage?"

"She can't marry him."

"Oh, Drake!"

"It is not possible."

"If you say so, I believe it, but I wish I knew why without asking."

"Because I happened to be the man who made his will."

"What has that to do with it? We can let them have money if they have not enough."

"It is not just that. It means he cannot will to his wife because there are others whose claim comes first. It might have been all covered up. Mary

could have been kept in ignorance. As it was, I let it leak out. I somehow wanted to be on the side of those who run straight. That is your doing, Judith. If he had told Mary,— but you see he did not.”

“She would forgive him — if —”

“Would you, Judith,— if —?”

“Seventy times seven, if he was sorry.” She turned and gave him that look which had come to be more to him than the most intimate surrender of any other woman’s embrace. It told him that she thanked her God they two had left the crawling lower nature behind them in the dusks of passion, and henceforth would love as the angels might “with the breadth of heaven between them.”

They entered the house. Suddenly he felt weak and helpless in the toils of a stronger mesh than he had reckoned against. If she had a vocation, he had not. If she was a Nun of the Universal Sisterhood he was no brother of any celibate order.

At the foot of the stairs they paused. She stood one step above him. He turned to her, eyes level with eyes, a royally mated pair.

“You will never overcome sex, Judith. Do not suppose that you will. It may lie dormant, or entranced a while, in special cases, but it is part of the original design. Sex revolution may prove to be the next step, inevitably, but even that will not effect any universal, permanent result.”

She did not argue it.

"Drake, are you bored?" she asked keenly.

"No, I am anxious about you."

"Why?"

"Because this life is too exciting in its exactions. You get too little rest or relief from the one point of view. It is too critical every moment."

"And you are splendid to me! I never dreamed a man could be so generous or so impersonal! Next to Reverdy, you are the best man God ever made!" She laid her hand on his shoulder as if to Knight him.

He clutched it in his own. "Then give me my reward. I cannot play fair any longer, like this. Come away with me this summer," he urged, breathlessly.

"And risk your chance to be Mayor in the fall?"

"What of it?"

"And all it would mean to the women we are trying to help?"

"What are all of them to me, if they cost You?"

"I am only one of them — 'what is good for the bee is good for the hive.'"

Heminway did then what he had resisted doing for exactly two years, one month and seventeen days. He turned the glove inside out.

He was deferential and gentle as ever, but he let her see what it had been for him; the obligation she had incurred morally, in becoming his wife and

letting him serve her. He did not take advantage of her ignorance, he did not now demand anything or assault her with words. He let her in on his own nature, his craving for All, that which a part of herself, only, could not satisfy.

He explained to her as a father might and a sister certainly ought, the full value of his patience and his joy in his power to be patient for her, his willingness to serve her and with her, politically, financially, with influence and without calculation, but he did not open her eyes to the scale overweighted on his side. "If it means no more than it did to you, I shall be better away for a while," he concluded. "I shall only annoy you, perhaps make you hate me. And my self-control is at an end for the moment. I care too much to be able to bear it as it is, until I get my second wind."

She was overwhelmed. If she would only take it as any other woman might. If she would only justify or protest or make a scene and cry. But she stood there as if she was gazing at her own part of the last judgment. Her colour gone, her eyes fixed and all the valour of her abashed before him.

What had he done? Was she not his wife?

Most of all he believed she was convicting herself.

"I did not know, I did not understand how you felt," she repeated brokenly.

He did not dare draw her to him. "Never mind, dear, never mind. We will think it over. Perhaps you will discover you want me, too. We will put it off till some time when you are not so tired," he soothed, trying to get the strained look off her face by any means.

"All that part of life frightens me. It seems wrong. I will give you my answer in the morning," she said firmly, and turned to leave him. A cruel sob tore her throat. He saw the storm was coming and followed her up the stairs.

"Judith, my darling, we have been such friends — don't go away alone to suffer about this. Let us light a big fire in the library and talk it out together. Don't look as if I was a stranger. We are not enemies, Dear. I love you with all the best you have taught me. Don't let us settle our happiness apart! It is just Drake, dear, just your own best Friend. If he hurts you it would serve him right to be cursed into everlasting."

As he talked he drew her into a great deep chair and lit the blaze. Then he knelt down beside her and began to comfort her as he would a suffering child.

She did not repel him. She held herself in check and they talked as few men and women have ever talked. She was no coward in her self-betrayal nor was he less finely frank. They faced it, un-

derstood each other. She fell asleep at last, exhausted, her head lightly against his arm.

Was there ever so strange a scene?

It was four in the morning when he waked her and guided her silently to her own room. He hated to disturb her, but the servants would be moving about if he delayed too long and they must not arm gossip against themselves.

He was triumphant, for after all she was a woman, struggle as she would she could not hope to withstand the eternal lure. He was not asking for the body paramount. He was only begging for the immemorial pledge of a lasting life to an immortal love. Only asking for herself, her soul, her divine essence. But she should not be allowed to give it against her will. He was no ruffian.

He did not try to sleep. The fixedness of his contemplation was like that of a Hindoo. He was not a man who prayed or had been brought up to "say his prayers." He sat now, only staring out of the window where the first light began to bring out in high relief the dim outlines of distant buildings, as star after star disappeared in the morning mist.

His entire being seemed caught between the chances of her decision. If she refused — would the leash hold? If she refused?

And all the while his strongest feeling was one of pity for her, for all women who were fine and

shrinking and exposed to much they could not understand or welcome, though they might want to supremely. And he knew if he had prayed, it would have been not that this cup should pass him, but her. Her tears had fallen on him hot as rubies, not the pallid pearls of lighter women. A tempestuous, mistaken nature was hers; a fierce Nun, a burning Saint, an uncompromising martyr, a passionate anything she chose! But would she choose him?

CHAPTER XII

BROTHER AND SISTER

IT was Poet's weather. Yielding to a sweet that was to prove fatal summer was sighing herself away in captivating whispers, dying with a smile on her lips and a red leaf in her hair. After driving rains, dropping nut, and fainting flower, came days of wistful reprieve, golden-hearted, tranced. "Such a funeral is good enough for me, and I would ride in the first coach. Winter will give her a beautiful shricing," Reverdy said without sadness.

They were sitting at his open window. The evening was warm and he was not ready to be settled for the night. Judith had gone to him breathless, the morning after her revealing talk with her husband, summoned by a pitiless telegram. It had waked her in the hand of a servant, and her reckless grief and haste drove her off on the first available train, sitting on the edge of her seat and helping the engine draw its load every inch of the way as she leaned forward in her impatience to be there.

Her decision as to her own future had been for a little taken out of her hands; taken up to the higher courts of Fate. It was supposed that Reverdy had only hours to live when she reached him, but gradually days had dragged him on in their passing and now the first decadence of summer found him a mere blue flame, but not as yet blown out.

And for once he was unwilling to submit himself to death, until his little sister was safe in her own certainty, harboured in her own high conviction. He trusted God, of course. But he loved Judith with that guarding care unceasing this side of the grave. Drake was in Europe. He had offered to stay, but when the first distracting crisis was over and the malady took a form likely to be indefinitely protracted, Judith would not hear of his remaining. She would never leave Reverdy again. Perhaps Drake Heminway understood and was glad to have their final conclusion put off. Possibly he relied on the intuition of a brother man to straighten things out between Judith and himself. If procrastination is the thief of some things, it also performs feats of restitution, and men, especially, hope in it when other expedients fail.

Drake had no notion of stopping on in town all summer with duty and without Judith; even if he had seen the duty, which he did not. So one of her girls, a Mary Hendee, the nurse who had stood

by in various critical cases before, had come to her and been with her only by her own preference.

They two had shared the hours of suspense followed by the peace and reaction of rest after pain; fighting nights when the dark poured in at the open windows as if to overwhelm them, and the horrid suffering would not let go; or the blessed freight trains, and far away cocks begin to make morning. When he slept she sat motionless beside him. Pain was more her habit now than joy. And she knew whatever might happen to her there would never be any pain like the far-off remembrance of one hour lost with him. These would be her nights of memory, rising in dreams to haunt her as long as she lived. In his stronger hours she had told him all her troubles and he had comforted her and fortified her as a brother only can, with the simple confidence that blood has in its own, and a sweet tenderness that is perhaps a bit of transmitted mother-love. He pitied her. He pitied Drake. Indeed, he pitied all his dear suffering world. He saw why it was agony for Christ to die without being able to save it from itself. To die, and not be sure of one's death helping — that was the bitterness. He agonised to help it all; loved it all.

To-night they sat hand in hand, watching the stars burn through the tallest trees.

“My Star in the tree-tops,” he was saying, “I

must get all possible joy with you every day, for the night is coming. I hope your young emergencies are nearly over, too. Combatting the perils that beset age are so different! Youth suffers more keenly. I am not so very much older than you, really; but I suffer with a consciousness that everything goes by, and nothing is *all* of life."

She clung to him silently. When she could trust her voice she said—"There is no relation like ours, Reverdy. I know that is why Christ chose it to express himself. I shall never think of you separately. It will be my two 'Elder' brothers that will rule my heart."

"It is passionless and unselfish," he assented, stroking her hand gently. "Do your best, Judy. Take time and do not decide until you are sure," he repeated over and over. "Then, whatever you believe is right to do, do not shrink! Though they crucify you."

She held his hands yet more closely.

"You have carried your cross like a banner," she cried.

"Death will be taking me down off my cross, soon; but, Sis, never forget, these later days have proved more fertile in expedients of crucifixion than early Jewish times. Our age has unfitted us in many ways and we do not adjust the old or the new. We have lost stolid physical endurance. Our nerves and emotions have outrun our wisdom.

modernism is torturing the saints, and men and women are restless under the law, but impotent to drag themselves up to a standard of freedom that shall also exact perfect rectitude."

"You mean we have not got far enough to make new standards for ourselves?"

"That is partly the trouble between you and Drake, dear. Women are further on than men. Men are primitive yet, on some sides, most of all on the side toward women. Woman, as mere flesh and blood, has only transient power, and it is just the spirit in you, which Drake cannot reach, that leads him on. You cannot hope to fully belong to each other, or fully understand each other's different needs. Stevenson says, 'To love a character is the heroic way of understanding it,— we apprehend the loved one by what is noblest in ourselves.' Love can throw a rainbow bridge over the chasm between you and Drake. Reason never can. If I had not been so busy dying, I believe I could have helped you both to see it a little, and to trust my advice for the sign-board at your crossways. Sallustius knew, when he said — 'While the body is young the soul blunders, but as the body grows old it attains its highest power.'"

"Your soul has never blundered," she declared.

"Oh yes! Often and often I have not even been a good Greek. I could not always say with Diogenes,

“Nothing to fear in God
Nothing to feel in death
Good can be attained
Evil can be endured.”

“You have never failed for one moment, Reverdy. I have never wished in any mood that you were different. You were always better than all the rest of the world, above and beyond. I have never felt life could swerve you from your course. That, I have depended upon.”

“No, dear, you have the stronger character of the two,” he objected. “Remember, your hand is on the universe every morning. You can turn it whichever way you will.”

She made a motion of dissent. “Have you forgotten your greatest Greek of all? He said, ‘Who has more Soul than I, masters me.’ I may have a more undisciplined will, but your soul has always been the Master.”

“It is just here, Judy, I want you to think about Drake. Does what happens to one in the body matter so much, if it perfects the soul? Two souls, perhaps? When I am dead, I want to feel that you are still my shining symbol. I want you to keep hold of Julian, too. I love him as my own kin. I was hurt by your estrangement, though I never could speak to you about it. If your paths cross again, and I feel they will, be very sisterly to him in my stead. His life has not been easy.”

Before she could command herself to speak, he continued, as if thinking aloud —

“I can’t believe in death. I have tried to, but Beauty and Love somewhere survive in terms of life, invisible, invincible!”

“Don’t Reverdy; don’t talk about the dying part of it. It kills me. I am not going with you.”

“Dear Heart, how could we live unless we died?” he rebuked her. “How could we soar if we had not first plodded along the mortal pathway up hill to the sky? How could the soul see unless the eyes were blind in earth’s delight? How could we see the stars except for the great all-encompassing darkness?”

She put her arm round his shoulder and drew him down on her breast.

“This has been a taste of heaven,” she whispered.

“Pray for more,” he bade her.

“I will. It will become part of the ritual of ourselves —”

“A kiss its outward symbol of sacrament,” he said, smiling his old sure smile.

“Rev darling, don’t, don’t leave me!” she implored sharply, catching her breath. “I’m afraid of myself. I am always afraid of the Love that will be too strong for me. I am afraid of the Aloneness that is so frightful even when one is with people, that awful Aloneness that is coming!”

"Never alone; always together; more together than ever," he whispered.

"You promise?" she said, with a dry sob that racked her.

"Always," he promised, and kissed her again.

Next morning while the birds choired in loops of ecstasy and the dawn lit the way, he went free. The Thrush sang on.

In those first days after—she only waited. Paula came and talked and cried and made plans and at last went away. People were everywhere at first; telling of his kindness to them in their own troubles. Some seemed appalled by life without him, much as she was herself. Some wrung their hands and went bowed from his valiant presence. One wreck of humanity repeated desperately—"He is a loss to me,—he is a loss to me," bewildered by his personal catastrophe.

No one was the least help to Judith now. She felt left out between the worlds in some remote out-cast space, cold and desolate. She lingered most in Reverdy's own room, vainly trying to piece together the human past with the unknown future, to unite her brother with the spirit of air and eternity he had become.

One morning she yielded to an impulse and burned a few of his most intimate belongings, which she could not bear to see or have others use, those dear meaningless things, bereft of value now.

As she raised herself from crouching over the blaze a voice said calmly—"I have had my fires, too."

She had believed herself alone. It was the nurse, Mary Hendee, who had spoken, bringing in the morning flowers for their accustomed places, leaving them as usual, where Reverdy had seen them without effort, cheating death of one little chill by no omission of this fragrant duty.

It was Miss Hendee who helped through those first confusions of blank and pain. Her passive impersonalities helped most of all. In the first inability to realise what had happened, that calm voice reassured.

"They do not suffer"—"They do not know"—"It is over for them before we have time to meet it." Or, she would say quietly,—"One case like this, out of a hundred, go as easily. It was without struggle"—or—"Often there is pain. I am glad he had no pain."

"But why don't we go mad?" was Judith's cry.

"Because it is not our nature. We are not made to go mad." was the cool reply.

Her statements brought order again. It was the rule of the race, then, the eternal, invariable law of life and death. This steadied her, reeling; tried for the first time in the actual face to face with dissolution. She was braced by assurance that this was so. Reverdy's death was not a mistake, not

an exception. It was part of it all. Gradually she accepted from the nurse a few disconnected props like these — spoken at random intervals and variously phased.

Others suffered in dying.

Others were less happy in having no one to care.

Others died alone, in wrecks, in hideous ways.

These "others" came to stand, in her mind, for a whole suffering race.

They became one with herself. She felt the great tragic army of all who suffer and die, shoulder to shoulder, as if they moved forward together across the battlefield. Alone? No; no one who has met death and realized this is ever alone again. She blessed Hugo for his teaching — "Thank God! death is a thoroughfare, not a blind alley!"

When Miss Hendee left her Judith intended to write to Drake, and leave their future to him. She did not feel the change toward him, in herself, that would make it impulsive, but she had taken a new sense of her own small part in the great plan, and out of Reverdy's persuasive example had come a new un-self that seemed to see the old egoistical Judith with far off eyes.

Drake had been "faithful in his fashion" and more — was giving her time, without reproach, and purposely holding off until she gave him a sign that she wanted him. It was too soon yet to think of any one but Reverdy. These weeks belonged to

him. She went up to her daily tryst, carrying to his grave the sweetest flowers, and waiting for his thrush that sang to her as it had to him, like Henry's "late lark from a quiet sky"—

Later she would come to life again. Later—but for a little she must be left to live the meaning into many things Reverdy had said to her. To get his ideal for her fixed in her mind. She knew that Love was all his prayer for her.

She sat alone to-night for the first time, at the head of the old mahogany table once surrounded by the living, all withdrawn into the shadow, now.

Her only guests were those of her soul. Mary Hende had gone back to her work. She ate and drank as if she too was far from her actual surroundings. She was, in fact, for she had reckonings to take, her North to find, and soundings within. She raised her eyes to those of her grandfather looking out at her from his portrait directly into her own. Her grandfather, who had been stricken down in Congress pleading for a law of the land; for a form of the same law Reverdy had implied she had wished to disregard. A red ray from the setting sun smote the brown eyes of the portrait and made them gleam at her with a softened light, wholly human. Was it challenge, pity, comprehension?

She did not know yet how to write to Drake. She knew she must write to-night. If he had not

shown her the impossibility of their present position, it would have been easy. She had lived with Reverdy as a little sister. She had lived on with Drake in the same happy trust and loved her work for her girls with all her strength. But if this could not endure, if Drake did not want her unless she gave up the life she called her own, unless she accepted strange conditions and gave herself up to experiences she had always dreaded, what was she to do or be? Why had God made women? Reverdy seemed to think it was all right. Why were not all women, men? Would they ever be? No, because that would not be as men wanted it. Had she sinned in letting Drake marry her if she did not know what no one told her? Was it her sin or his mistake? She had thought Julian exaggerated. Why had Pauline not made her see that men wanted women for none of the reasons she had ever supposed compelling? Were there no exceptions? Was there no man, no woman, who wanted each other for mutual love and worship? For beautiful service and selfless joy? Reverdy made her feel herself blind and ignorant. What if the truest love meant sacrificing all one hoarded most sacredly one's own — Yes, she owed this to Drake. She had been blind but not perverse. In her own life she had done exactly that for which she censured other women; her motive only exonerated her to some degree.

The door-bell rang.

It was an alien sound there in summer with its habit of open doors. She hardly noticed that the maid had answered it until a card lay before her.

It was Julian's.

It was a constrained meeting. To her enquiries he replied that he had learned of Reverdy's illness too late to get there sooner,—he had run across Heminway in Paris—"And, of course, I came," he said, as if she would find it perfectly natural. They were still standing. It had not occurred to either to notice it. He thought her impressive in her soft mourning, that made her even taller than he remembered. Her face showed the feeling that had ravaged it, but was that of the radiant Judith, in spite of its grief. It is sin that mars, not suffering. She had never been more part of the unreal light that "never was on sea or land" than as she stood before him in her brother's empty home.

"I do wish he could have seen you,—if only once more," she said, "and you could have seen him"—she added.

"I shall never know a regret as keen as this for not having come in time. I was on my way to him, before I knew of his illness."

They fell silent. She appreciated his not making their loss a pretext for display of sentimentality or protestation, as many men might. He showed even less disposition toward renewal of their old

intimacy than she herself felt natural under such constraining circumstances.

"Do sit down," she said, coming back to the present with an effort.

Julian walked across the room to the desk still open, and stood with his back to her as he let his eyes absorb every familiar object, one by one.

He was still standing before her when he asked, coming back to her, "Did he speak of me?"

Judith glowed. "One of the last names on his lips," she assured him.

Julian crossed himself.

They waited. She was watching him closely now. He had matured ideally. The man kept all the promise of the boy and was still prophetic.

"May I know?" he begged softly.

"It was near the very last,—'Tell Julian I shall not forget him,'" she repeated.

"He could trust me not to forget him," Julian said slowly. "That was like him. He could not believe in death. He knew he was immortal. We were close as two men can be, that year he was abroad. Oh, Judy, tell me everything you can! I loved him too, you know. He was more to me than any one else in the whole world. He was a man who never made one tired by monotony, or shallowness, or bruised one with untimely wit or made one shrink from too intrusive friendship. He hedged himself with ceremonies with his own exceptional

delicacy. I cannot talk about him. He was too fine for words. I wish I had been a little worthy of his friendship. In some renewed form of life it may all come again."

Quietly then she told him all she could command herself to tell of their summer together, of his putting on immortality before their mortal eyes and making them share each step nearer celestial satisfaction. She did not speak of herself nor did he. They met impersonally as ghosts. They dwelt together on their faith, their hopes, their Reverdy. They scarcely touched upon their youth, except through some association shared by him.

As she talked he thought she looked more than ever like a triumphant angel of Fra Angelico.

"I always see you against a background of sheer gold," he said, out of his own reflection. It was his only approach to anything personal.

She did not tell him how she saw him or if she saw him at all. She was finding him the Julian of all her life. The same Julian, except for an added grace of bearing, a stronger outline, a finer beauty in the line of the nose, chastening the boyhood hint of the sensuous also latent in his mouth, whose sweetness self-control had now set more firmly, with a less marked fulness that failed to hide the more passionate intensity. The delicacy of the temples where the dark hair grew low, and the handsome brow were strong of intellect as Rev-

erdy's own. In figure he was splendidly the man; not a line of heaviness or curve of weakness to mar him; lithe, vigorous, unhampered by any physical taint.

She had an instant pride in him. After all, he was theirs. He belonged to them more than to any one over the sea.

Judith too had taken her training in the world. She had acquired a standard of criticism that knew him for what he was; exceptional, very much the artist, still the Catholic, a charming and probably dangerously magnetic man, a peril to the peace of women.

She was grateful that he could never menace hers.

When he rose to go, she asked with the abruptness of childhood, "Do you still pray, Julian?"

"Of course."

"Do you believe in it just as you did?"

"More."

"And will you begin, from this time, and pray that I may?"

"I cannot."

"You cannot?"

"I cannot begin, I have never left off."

His glance smote her. If a sword had cleaved her, the pang could have been no more keen. She looked away. Was it the sword of Tristan between them?

"I could only be religious as a mystic," he said.

"But is it real? Will it hold out against what comes to you in life?"

"I worship. I do not attempt to think out the mysteries. I accept them."

"I am a Nun at heart, I believe," she said wistfully, "but I have to think things through."

"I am sorry for you."

"When do you go back to Europe?" she asked conventionally.

"At once." There was no hint of regret.

"I am so glad to have seen you, just here, and been able to tell you all I have. Reverdy would have been,—is, I mean, glad," she corrected herself. It would always be that struggle now. To keep him present tense, instead of letting the past take him from them.

"There is a mere chance I may run up for a few hours to-morrow. If I can do what I must in town and get through in time. If I should find I was able, may I come up for another glimpse of you here?"

"Of course, Julian."

"It is only a shadow of a chance. Bye, Judy."

Again he gave her that look that smote her.

After he had gone she realised it was his real farewell. They had not even shaken hands. He had spared her any effort of emotion. It was after ten. She put off writing Drake until to-morrow. She had too much to think of after seeing Julian

again. It had roused too many forgotten things. He and Reverdy were almost inseparable in her memories of childhood. It bound them closer to know that Julian had kept faith with his religion. Reverdy and he must have been together in the deeps of belief, even if in creed and experience they diverged ever so widely. Some time she would get Julian to tell her about that time abroad together. Of her husband they had not spoken, save for the passing mention of his being in Paris and speaking of Reverdy's illness. Of that look which had unnerved her she would not think. That had no association with Reverdy. For Julian and herself there could be now no ground of meeting where Reverdy was not.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CATASTROPHE

JULIAN'S transient reappearance had wakened insistent memories. With her letter to Drake still unwritten, she spent most of the next day over a trunk of old letters, up in the sloping garret close under the eaves. Those of Reverdy's brief betrothal were to be burned unopened by his own request. Her own to him she tore after reading fragments here and there, smiling or interrupted by gusty tears. They seemed those of another girl now, she had got so far from their groping mists of girlhood. Those of her parents she preserved, with a few of those from her grandfather to her grandmother during their stately courtship, two generations ago. They were uniformly signed, "Your Obedient Servant." They bade her mind her health, for he had noticed a slight cold when they held their last interview of, to him, enjoyable memory. In one he promised to see her when he came to the Shire town adjoining, on the Governor's Staff at the County Fair next week.

Her father's side of the house had been Puritan-

ism rampant. She understood herself better as she read these decorous, restrained expressions of enduring devotion. After the sun got behind the tallest hills she gathered an armful of mignonette borrowed from the bees, and carried it up to the little churchyard, where Reverdy and his Love shared the beneficence of peace.

She sat there a long time, thinking of them, watching the shadows fill the valley at her feet and vowing herself anew to the life she had chosen, the vocation for which she felt herself born.

A great full moon rose and tilted over the darkening horizon before she turned away. She had never felt such profound sadness. She was cut off from all natural home love and family relation. The Aloneness she had dreaded, threatened her. She could not eat her dinner in that solitary dining-room to-night. She ordered something brought out on the porch. The servants were restive to be off to the village on some errand of their own. She delayed them only to serve her coffee. Their voices came back to her as they hurried down the path to the quiet street. What should she write to Drake?

A whippoorwill distracted her for a few moments. Its body was too small for its passion. It seemed bursting with a frenzy of pent desire.

There was not much excuse for lingering on here. She must finish what there was to do and

get back to town to her work. What would happen if she was not there to answer those distracted emergency calls? The others had done well, but it was her own work, not theirs. If she cabled Drake instead of writing? Cabled him to meet her in town? Could she go on and live as that implied? Would it be fair to recall him only to take it up where they had laid it down?

Reverdy thought not.

Would it be any more fair to give him unwillingly, what he wanted with his whole best self? Reverdy had given her to understand that he thought so. And if she refused? Round and round the same endless circles she revolved, as the soft night grew dense and the moon less neighbourly, more ghostly and ethereal.

The warmth of the night drew the scent from the flowers.

She heard the long call of the evening train from the crossing a mile distant up the valley. After a little on the hooded road from the village, at the foot of the Rectory hill, came the rumble of the one village cab. The heavy hoofs of the horses in their jog trot drew nearer. A man coming to a woman, as it happened:—they two alone in the summer beauty and blossomed dark.

Down below, at the gateway, it stopped:—silence,—then the slam of a carriage door,—that quick hint of town and winter conveyed in the

sound, then a courteous "Good-night," followed by the young driver's "Thank you, Sir."

A swift step was on the path. Through the lighted hall she went to meet him. She intended to say, "Why, Julian, this is a charming surprise!" What she did say was only—"Why, Julian!"

He took both her hands in his own exclaiming, "Judith la grande et belle!"

"And I hope la douce et bonne," she rejoined. It was part of a pretty dialogue they had called their litany, long ago.

From the composure of her demeanour he caught the hint for his own, becoming casual at once. "I found I could get back, by leaving at daybreak on the freight, and I could not resist the impulse toward the old place. May I stay?"

"And if you left town at five, you have had no dinner," she suggested thoughtfully.

"No, and what is worse no chance to make myself fit to greet a grande dame."

She was stately in her long black frock. She awed him a trifle, in spite of her sweet simplicity with him.

"I will get something ready for you and you can go up to Reverdy's room and make yourself Julian le grand et beau."

That made it as if they were boy and girl again. If she was surprised by his coming, he did not guess it.

If he was unduly excited, she did not observe it. This one place on earth was so wholly theirs, neither could refuse the other a right to it.

She arranged his impromptu dinner deftly. He returned correctly turned out in his dinner coat.

"How could one dine with a *grande dame*, otherwise?" he cried in response to the amusement in her eyes. And secretly she adored his instinct, while aloud she contrasted it with his familiar unconcern with dirty hands, in their golden days of youth.

She sat with him and he chatted delightfully as he ate and drank. It was only cold meat and a salad with a long necked bottle of Rhine wine to grace it, but he never compared it with any other meal, all his life long, without disparagement to the other. Without effort he revealed himself for the man he was. Without vanity he let her understand his artistic career at its real value. The Church always attracted him. He had all but taken orders once. At the decisive hour there had been too much beauty to leave behind in the visible world. He had drawn back. They talked of books and poets and theories. He had distanced her in every way she had to confess, with a tinge of regret for having been left behind. It was good of a man like Julian to come back and try to cheer her. After they left the dining-room they strolled up and down in the garden as he smoked; talking, alert,

happy perhaps. The sweetness of the mignonette and white clematis flower pervaded. To Julian it grew subduing. While he was speaking it seemed to overwhelm his breath, he had a sensation of drowning in it. It covered him, veiled him, closed over him. When the village clock below struck eleven, somnolently, they counted it together. It grew chill. The moon dove into a cloud as they passed slowly back into the house. He stood in silence watching the fireflies from the long open windows. Did they both dread the next word, or only one of them? Were they aghast at the need of parting?

He drew a long breath and threw back his head. She had seen him do it as a boy before a cold plunge into the river. It meant leaving the dream and going back into life again.

"Good-night. That is easier to say than good-bye, always," she said, putting out her hand.

He clenched it so that it hurt her.

So bound, she looked up at him saying wistfully, "Julian, hold on to me. Don't let go of me entirely, again. Write to me sometimes. I am terribly alone. You are the only friend I have now."

His grip only tightened on her hand. She tried to withdraw it in pain, but he was close to her, caught her to him, holding her, kissing her eyes, her hair, whispering, "Oh, you are not a Nun! You are not! You are a woman! A glorious woman

made for love and passion. You shall not be a Nun. You must not be!"

In those scarred kisses her spirit escaped her to him, lay beaten and sore before his heart. As if it had all happened to another, without responsibility or will on her part, his arms went round her, she felt the thrill and divine trouble of sex: as if the cry of unborn sons of his and hers had stirred.

For one blind, resistless embrace instinct had its way. She threw herself upon him with all her force. He drew her head away and kissed her thirstily, panting. Their breath came gasping, fluttering as if they had run to each other across the world. She realised first and drew herself from him.

"We are mad, quite mad," she said calmly.

"Mad, but divinely!" he said unevenly, like a man still running fast and far in great heat.

"It was my fault," she went on gravely, without shame, "I wanted it so! I have never wanted it before."

"And you shall have it!" he swore, embracing her again, more gently; smoothing her bright hair with a hand that trembled in spite of him, kissing her shoulder, crooning over her as if she was cradled. "There must be a way. I will find it. Reverdy knew it would come to you. You are young, vibrant, alive. You are not sick or weary

or done with life. *Chère et adorée, passionnante et passionnée!*"

"I wanted it so!" was all she found to say in excuse. "I do not understand what has made me"—

"Of course you did! You are a woman made for love and the joy of loving."

"We are quite mad," she repeated dully. As she rose, she tottered. He would have caught her but she drew aside.

"Look at me, Judith," he implored, but she could not raise her eyes. His own burnt through her lowered lids.

"We belong to each other."

"How long have you known it?" she asked in that same lifeless voice.

"We have always known it," he claimed. "Look at me!"

She knew it was the worst thing she had ever done in her life. She gave him her eyes, her consent, her soul perhaps. Nothing mattered. She did not know what she gave or took.

"I have always been yours," he said simply. She must respect that in him.

"My creed for your faith is changeless. I believe in love, silence and touch: and that I am alone in your heart: that my eyes only can pain you or my mouth wound: that all men beside are dust beneath your feet: that wherever you go, whatever

you do, there is no one, nothing, that can fill your soul but me."

"It is all strange to me. I am married. But I have never felt this; or given to another what I am giving you," she returned bravely.

They read each other to the depths in another gaze.

"God! how I want you!" she heard him mutter hoarsely.

"I want you," she admitted unflinchingly.

"But do you understand, Judith, even now? I do not want to leave you; ever. I want to stay with you."

She clung to him not with her weakness but with a noble new-found strength, that vigour great love gives a woman unabashed.

"I am not myself. I meant to be dignified and true"—she began firmly, when he broke in—

"Oh, my Beloved! We have lost years being dignified and true! I do not care or know if you are married or divorced or true or mad. I want you and you want me. We belong to each other after the decree of Nature. You know it now. You cannot mate with any other man. I cannot with any other woman. We may try,—but Nature is not mocked. She has her work to do. One proof of it is that our bodies cry out for each other. We cannot let each other alone. Go from me! Go!" loosing his hold and drawing away from her. "Ah

Judith, you cannot, you cannot, we belong to each other!" he sobbed, as she did not move.

Again they were in each other's arms possessing and possessed.

Only a few hours before, she would have taken her oath he was nothing more to her than other men. Was it outraged Nature that had betrayed her? Confused and reproachful she had cried out at him, "We are mad!" and abandoned herself to his embrace.

In the merciless calm, after their first wild outbreak had been a little appeased, she recovered her sense of the situation.

"We are mad, Julian," she repeated dully. "I am a Puritan."

"We belong to each other," he insisted, as if that was all that mattered now.

"No Julian, you are a catholic. There is no legal way out for us. Our convictions are like a blue edged sword across our breasts, between us. We could come to each other only after laying them down. I know now how hopeless love is: how it has overtaken me: how against our wills we do belong to each other. I admit everything. But I shall fight it,—unless it kills me first."

"You may fight, but you will lose. The day will come when you will want me more than a Puritan ideal. Then you will come. Do not let it be too late!"

His conviction shook her. There was the old fear of love in her voice as she cried —

“ Nothing keeps me from you but instinct fastened on me by inheritance. You are welcome to me, to hurt or bless or cherish or kill. But the New England in me is as if I had been born deaf and dumb,— I cannot change it. And I know my soul belongs to the dead man and woman who gave me life through worship of each other and their God. That makes me afraid, even of you, my Julian. I shrink from nothing that could come to me with you —

“ Then come, dear, let me make a way. Trust my love. Love me, as you only can.”

“ That is not all. I do shrink from disgracing their memory in the honourable traditions of their race. Down the long line of generation, there is not one who has defied the teaching of their church or broken the ten commandments or their country’s law. If it was to choose between you and death, — it would be too easy. I belong to you, but we two on the devil’s side in God’s world — what should we find? You have your work and your religion. I have my woman’s treasure; the pain and wonder of love, and what it is to go without. In our sane moments we shall be glad we have kept our love alive instead of murdering it.”

He let her speak on, sadly accepting what she said of herself as truth to her.

"Judith, say again that you want to come," he entreated, when she paused.

"I say it frankly, Julian, I want to be yours."

"You would not have the old dread?"

"I would gladly die for what you would give me of yourself."

"You have no child, dear?"

She covered her face with her hands. He saw that even the intimation seemed sacrilege to her, and though tormented by the pain he had inflicted, he went resolutely on, "Judy dear, you can be free without publicity; it would be a brief and simple step. You would only be subjected to a few minutes of legal formalities. I will go abroad at once and wait until you send for me, if you wish."

In a flash, memory presented to her the Court house, a summer morning, the bold eyes of the office boy demanding, "Have you got your papers? You are divorce suit—" It turned her to ice.

"Have you been happy? Were you at first?" he was begging now.

She lifted her face to him, a face he had never seen on his little friend of boyhood or the cold, intellectual, magnificent Judith of later years. Tears blinded her as she confessed herself to him. "I never knew I had it in me till to-night,—and knowing it, I cannot wrong it."

They clung to each other appalled.

Oh Woe, Oh Earth, Oh Love! Worst by one

greater than Apollo, smitten by the Implacable, her lips burning from their contact with his, how was she to regain her soul or turn back to the worship of the shrines Love had so disrespected and overturned? Her faith in herself was gone.

As one stricken she went from him at last without a word or sign.

Once upon the stairs she stumbled, heard him start after to support her, gripped the balustrade and dragged herself on. At the landing, she saw without looking back that he stood on the lowest stair, devouring her with his eyes. The pain of it made her faint, but she made no recognition and passed on to the covert of her own room. Once there, the door closed, she stood transfixed.

And Julian? He had not dared to urge or question. He let her go without a protest. She had chosen as a Vestal chooses, but she had known what love was, first. She could never be ignorant again. Let her turn back if she could! Oh, wisdom of Satan inherent in his sons, Julian stalked with the pride of one sure of her, now. She could not do without him. It was her reason for being,— to love him and be loved by him. She would find it out.

He left his belongings where they were and went down to his own house, letting himself in without waking any one. Sailing was out of the question now, until — the sequel made him sleepless.

And Judith lay all night, burning where his touch

had scorched her. Her arm thrown across her breast recalled his clasp—she breathed short to feel again in imagination the delight, as if he still strained her to his heart. The flame of him crept through her veins. What had he done to her? Was this her Julian or a stranger, one of their revengeful Gods in disguise? She gave herself over to the pain and rapture of it. Was this love? Was this the strange thick magic that made men and women long for darkness and each other's bodies as well as the spirit? Was this death? Death! She had never come to life until to-night. Then out of the black shadows of night it came to her that this must be sin. The wanton kiss of Apollo, feared in childhood, had found her and undone her. The license of her desire appalled her. Remorse dragged her down.

She hated him now. She cursed him. Only one thought rescued her from horror of herself, and that was that she would never see him again. He could never get her under his spell again. He had humiliated her by forcing her to admit the sickening secret of her thwarted life to him. Her senses had betrayed her beneath his wild caresses. The woman in her was writhing under the revelation not only to him but to herself. Was she, Judith, only an animal after all? A brute without a mate, ready to answer the call of any male in the jungle? God forbid! But what had God to do with a

woman such as she had become? She slipped weakly to her knees and prayed incoherently,—to Reverdy, not God, imploring pardon, perfect purity, perfect love.

She felt unequal to the day that aroused her. But her chin was implacable. Her eyes did not flinch. Judith would hate as she had loved. Knowing his power she was armed to resist. She did keep herself from him. He had to go from her without seeing her. All his entreaty was in vain. He wrote her ; letters tender, reasonable, beseeching, quite mad, of course.

“ Nous appartenons,— come ! ” was all their burden.

But how could she go to Julian?

She could not.

But how could she not go to him?

She could not. Nor could she fight it out here, where she had succumbed.

But if not here, where? He was waiting on in town ; letting ship after ship sail without him.

She dared not risk a chance meeting. She did write to him at last. Her letter was that of Orren Kern's Judith and Reverdy's, not his own.

I speak to you as to my own soul, I who have no one else to speak to except in my prayers. I cannot see you because I cannot trust myself. We may wish our parents had been pirates,— but they were not. Call it bigotry of my individuality or what you will, we cannot play pirates all our life.

You reason shrewdly in supposing my moral sense will be blunted by the pain too sharp to ignore, increasing till it is the only reality in life, till only to stop that distracting struggle against it a woman would give everything else, yielding to a fixed idea just as a suicide dashes over a cliff at last.

You know how terrible this love for you is to me. It is martyrdom without you. If I could do it—but I cannot, and here is the tragedy of Puritanism for us both. I have one consolation; what you have wakened will not die. It will live on hour by hour in a thousand varying struggles, in exquisite phases of loneliness, in regret, in the despair of dreaming. We have not killed it, we have saved it alive. You believe that once having had her lover near her no woman can endure alone, but for me there is no other way. I can only say good-bye, I bless you always and only hope that Reverdy is too happy to know what I suffer.

JUDITH.

This letter was never answered.

What answer was there possible? It was just the unique thing about his Judith that she had kept her standards of childhood, though exposed to every depraved sophisticated practice of modern laxity. Being a Puritan, she was haunted by the right of childhood, the ought of self. If she did what those about her were doing shamelessly, it would be a violation, a deliberate choice of evil, because for her it was evil. Julian bowed to the inevitable Judith in her, which made her Reverdy's "star in the tree-tops," though it denied him his supreme best of life.

CHAPTER XIV

LAMARTINE

WHEN Drake said good-bye to the Bradishes in Paris in late August, they had all supposed Reverdy might linger on, an invalid for many months to come. Pauline had not hurried home. She had, in fact, arrived after his death, and hearing nothing from Judith, Drake had naturally concluded she preferred to be left quite to herself just at first. He had written regularly and her failure to respond hurt him. He had been patient, loyal and devoted. He had done for her what probably no other man she knew would have conceived possible. He had respected her as sacred without a thought of any less chivalric resolution. It seemed to him he merited her confidence. Pauline wrote to him that Judith was perfectly well; though of course prostrated by her loss. He could not see why no word came to him from her. Until she wrote, considering the equivocal terms of their last parting, he felt something holding him back. He felt it not for him to take the initiative. He was afraid to offend her. He would not force

himself upon her, neither would he attempt to live again as they had lived, unless there was reasonable hope of his eventually winning her to a normal relation. Of course her position gave ground for separation, but he had taken it upon himself with his eyes open, so he kept his mouth shut, especially to the Braddishes. Only Ferdinand at parting made one remark which showed masculine affinity.

“ I should not blame you, Drake, if you were indiscreet. If I were young, and the superb creature I had married turned a cold shoulder on me, wouldn't I—? etc., etc. All the way over Ferdinand had a half mind to tell Paula how he felt about the Heminway impasse. He hesitated and was saved providentially, for a man never regrets what he has not told his wife. He forgets it, but she does not and that is only a small part of what happens either.

Alone, “ on the loose,” as he phrased it, Drake Heminway found it surprisingly easy to resume his bachelorhood. His life with Judith had not been without a tense element of moral strain. Now, whether he was caught up by eager motor parties and sped over endless ribbon roads that were like nothing but blank verse punctuated by inns of comfort; or eating and drinking to orchestras in a blur of gay French flowers, or dancing in polyglot swarms at artificial “ baths ” where nature was flawless as forgotten, there were always smiles to greet

him; always eyes that kindled or made believe kindle or looked down to avoid showing they kindled for him. In England it was the same story. London in June had been crossed continually by people he knew, and his Oxford experience had left a number of cordial Englishmen who were ready to put him up at the clubs and drive him down to their people in the country whenever he was in the mood.

Perhaps in the best of men there is a certain reversion to the bachelor type inevitable, given the irresponsible setting again. No married woman craves spinsterhood; pure and simple, or impure and complex, if she is off with the old life it is for sake of being on with a new, already visible above her horizon. To Drake it was natural, too. All so natural! He went to the opera and the play. He met acquaintances and made acquaintances, in the foyer, at the races, everywhere. He frequented the gay cafés, he idled on the boulevards, he took tea at any of the fantastic casinos in the Bois, with whatever company turned up and claimed him. Judith had been rigid in her dislike of almost all modern plays. An occasional concert was about her only variation on the eternal theme of her vocation. So Drake enjoyed himself tremendously. And if it was rarely, if ever, the same woman who smiled at him at the opera, who had smiled at him at the races the afternoon before, why that was all

the safer, and so long as some women did smile, life went on brightly without a cloud.

He found it as bright as the beds of rose-coloured geraniums that bloomed everywhere in cheerful profusion. Peasant love they symbolised for him: gay, irresponsible, un-self-conscious, productive!

Men are so much simpler than women —

For weeks it went on; merely Drake Heminway in his element; that element he had been so distinctly out of, if not debarred from, since his marriage.

He thought of Judith much as an indulgent father might think of an absent daughter, or an absentee landlord of a lovely and lonely estate. There are, among others, two kinds of men. One has appetites which increase on starvation diet: feed this variety and it sleeps. Such men know the value of a fast before a feast, are responsive to the unknowable, un-overtakable lure of religion, and to the cold chaste type of women who deny them; to all in short that is inexplicable and that is out of reach. The second class, realising that a certain type of woman is not for their consumption, stop wanting it, and take eagerly whatever is offered them by heaven. Of this more-possible-to-be-appeased class was Heminway. He reasoned that if Judith had her summer to herself, he could have

his. He did not discriminate as to the purposes to which they severally committed themselves. If a country village in the heat, duty and nursing and renunciation were really her game, the one she was best at and wanted to play, and the one she had signified she could play best alone — he was not too much a man of the world to force her to pleasure which was not pleasure to her. His unformulated attitude was that of James the Second, "this man desires to be a martyr and his desire should be gratified." Meantime pleasure certainly was his own game; pleasure of every order.

It was soon after the Braddish sailing that he caught himself for the first time looking for an individual smile. It was one night at a supper party given by his friend Percy Bemmesley, an Oxford man, just now in Paris with his wife and sister-in-law; his brother's wife.

"I call her my 'belle-sœur' because she likes it better," he explained to Drake on presentation. "She is not a widow, you see, and she is not my brother's relict, in any sense, because she relinquished him. I fancy no man would relinquish her, don't you know?"

Mrs. Hayden Bemmesley was of French birth. From their first meeting Drake shared his friend's point of view. He could not imagine any man relinquishing her, either, now his attention was called to it. Then he remembered Judith. Next

he remembered he had not relinquished her. "What was the name you called her?" he asked Percy, the next time she went out of hearing.

"Her given name is Lamartine," Percy said quizzically, "Lamartine Du Parras. Her mother named her after her own favourite poet, because her father died before their child was born and the mother was something of a sentimental Tommy. It is a fool name, but somehow it goes with her eyes, don't you think? When one remembers the mournful stuff that chap wrote, don't you know? I fancy both women have had a rotten kind of struggle. The mother died of a broken heart and Lamartine has had a rough time of it with my brother Hayden; no use saying she has not."

The person in question was small and not pretty, but of a gaiety unparalleled. It took Drake a good many hours of intent reflection to decide if she was merely not pretty, or really ugly. She had that kind of perplexing face which, without attracting you unduly at the time, gets round you behind your back,—the saddest face and gayest tongue that ever clashed. In figure she was frankly petite Parisienne. Her mouth was too wide, the colour of these geranium flowers. Her feet were too small to be in good taste. Her eyes were too bright to be dark, more like dazzling precious stones than any eyes he remembered, and often they seemed dazzling him through unshed tears. Her hair was conven-

tional, elaborately dressed, duskish, he thought. It was her chic which held every other woman distanced. Grant them everything — then let her enter and they, all of them, took their proper place, seemed overdressed, artificial, crude or ineffective according to their kind.

“She has a way,” her brother-in-law admitted to her, “a way of her own that defies everything but surrender. Some women are like tobacco,” he went on confidentially, “you don’t care about it so much while you are smoking it, but you miss it like the devil if you can’t get it.”

“And in America some women are like the one who went to heaven and said she would look further,—before she made up her mind,” Hemingway assented with a new sting in his tone.

“One rather fancies Lamartine put up with a most awful lot in my brother, before this. He is quite a brute, you know. We try to make it up to her for she behaved beautifully about it all and never made a scandal, as she jolly well might. It is rough on a girl like that to be thrown over the side of the boat. They could not either of them get a divorce without a lot of howl. So they just walked off in different directions. It is worst for her, for of course, if she does not run straight, he gets it without a question. And for a man those things arrange themselves, so all the time, you know,”—his inference was unmistakable.

This especial night when her smile failed him, though the flowers were staunch and the Hungarian bands unabated in fervour, something was distinctly gone. It was as if the champagne had no fizz or the violins had lost their high strings. For Drake Heminway it was the first personal note in the full orchestration of his brilliant summer.

The next time he saw her it was by chance with her brother-in-law, and when both were unconscious of his presence.

They stood together on the narrow iron balcony under the deep falling awning just outside their salon window. The noise of the street came up from below. He was admitted by a servant who supposed the place empty. Her figure was in relief against a balcony box of the eternal rose-coloured geraniums of Paris in summer. He never saw the flowers afterward without the scene before his eyes. She was lifting her inscrutable eyes to the tall Percy, who stared down into them.

"Witch!" he heard the Englishman say reproachfully, but with an admiration that betokened imminent loss of head.

"Solely on that one condition," she insisted.

Then putting up her lips — oh, what had ever made him think her mouth ugly! — "I will promise to be good," she coaxed.

Percy groaned, but he kissed her, or would have, except that Heminway stepped out on the balcony.

His friend was embarrassed, but she cried light-heartedly,

“ Ah, it is Mr. Heminway! You come, apropos, to decide a question of grave importance. My beau-frere here, would have me to be jealous of his wife. Ah, yes, Méchant! You would!” flashing him a smile, “ And I say it is only of the wife of a man that I am never able to be jealous. Of all else, justly, only not of his wife.”

Both men began together, “ But surely —”

“ Oh, really now —”

“ You mistake the —”

“ You do not take into consideration —”

“ Ah, but no, listen and do not make mouthfulls of air. You both know it is so. You are guilty!” She laughed a wicked little triumph over their simplicity. “ If it were not true, you would say nothing. It is not worth your while to argue with poor feminine hearts. But it is true that there are many things more difficult to understand than those blessed mysteries in which the priests instruct us, and which men find so difficult. To women the most difficult mystery is why men want us only until they get us.”

“ And women too?” Heminway asked quickly.

“ What women want I must not reveal. It is our only secret. It is for each man to find out,” she parried.

"That is rather a rum theory," the Englishman objected.

"To us it is sad,—to know this truth, to be assured, like the hero of Balzac's magic skin, that it shrinks, shrinks, shrinks, with every gratification!"

"Oh, I say, one could begin over with a new incentive," urged Bemmesley.

"It is but to begin that same enchanting devastation over again."

"All passes, art alone endures," quoted Heminway.

"That is your saying?" Lamartine asked. "We say, apropos, 'tout lasse, tout passe, tout casse.'"

It left the American at least curious as to who had wearied and broken, and from whom it had passed. He had seen his cool English friend once when he had rowed winning stroke on Iffly in a close match. He saw the same look when that kiss had been interrupted by his untimely arrival.

What demons of discontent women were, anyway! What did they really want? To Drake they seemed like the dog which had eaten his railway tag, liable to be put off at any destination by a forgetful man. And while he cursed out their whole true nature, he was excited, and glad to feel that he was excited by one of the evil instruments of the world's ultimate means to that desirable end.

After this, step followed step so naturally he

ceased thinking about it. Percy's wife, born Lady Letty Barrs, was a girl of all the vaunted English qualities. Drake had liked her at once, resenting his friend's rather taking her for granted, in his cavalier fashion. They had left two young children at home with her people while they ran over for a little motoring on the continent. Percy was keen to have his *belle-sœur* go along and urged Heminway to make out the party.

The little Gallic humming bird was ravished by the plan and it appeared Lady Letty was no less eager. Drake had supposed something would turn up to do next, and here it was. What was there for him to do but go along? He always went along with somebody, did he not? There was no reason he should refuse in this case, just because he happened to want to accept.

Lady Letty was far from slow, it proved; an all-round modern English girl, good in the hunting field and a stiff sailor, yachting in all kinds of dirty weather. Away from England and her matronly cares she became a high-bred sort of sport, going in for her holiday as eagerly as her husband, even taking the wheel of the motor out of his hands; often, too, for her steady nerve was his pride. She was a handsome woman of the florid type, a woman quickly perceived in a crowd, and one to be reckoned with and on. When her Lord looked his approval at her, she coloured like heather in August.

Drake saw she could hold her own and his too, if she wanted to, and let go that part of his responsibility with a sigh of genuine relief. He had no mind to chaperone Percy Bemmesley on a protracted intrigue with the mocking Lamartine at his side.

She was undoubtedly for joy. She made fun of herself with all the rest of life's serious mischances. She was gay over the most serious things and only talked with solemnity of trifles. She was light and transitive, never held on to a topic, never was grey or heavy or tedious or profoundly intentional. After the epoch-making firmness of his own wife, it was to Heminway like a breath of native air to a returned wanderer. What if Lamartine was not deep? What if she did nothing for her world in return for the questionable boon of being born into it to suffer, against her will? What if she did forget the tears women were dropping at all hours, all over the distressed globe? Her laughter was a cocktail and her exhilaration made him reel. Life was dreary enough without taking eternity to bed with one! The trip was every moment a merry-making.

They slept with Alpine sentinels surrounding them, waking to scenery where the chromo no longer is a jest, to set off in the sparkle of the morning, with the spirit of huntsmen, on the white tracks of the high peaks against an azure sky; while streams rushed headlong, hurry-skurry, no time to

play, don't stop to look where you are going, away, to tumble into the torrent that tears to the glacial river that sweeps it into the sea; climbing up to look down, or from the green valleys looking up, it did not matter; the Alps within them hailed the Alps above. Over the Tête Noir they wound; by deeper ravines, narrower footing, more jagged rocks, stormier torrents, steeper descents, greener pastures where the cow bells gurgled and desolation was increased by the near glacier and pitiless ranges of ice in the background: making zigzag Alpine descents that caused Lady Letty to ask, "Are we doing this for pleasure?" as she clung to the edge of her seat.

"Up, up!" Lamartine cried, "the torrent knows the route." When the horn of a goatherd echoed faintly from an opposite hillside Drake asked her, "Does the shepherd call his sheep?"

"Ah, no, but he is sad all alone. He blows to amuse himself," she replied, and her hand went to her lips imitating his horn to a marvel. She knew every step of the way. Here the stream was sweet to drink; next, some green nuts attracted her and bidding them wait, she was off up the perpendicular bank like a squirrel. Red berries that "make not of the poison," harebells, no phase of the way escaped her. It was at Zermatt that Lady Letty tried to buy a novel of a French newsdealer who in-

sisted on speaking English. "Is it clever?" she asked, holding up a recent one.

"Clever, but no, I give to you nothing clever, be assured. Is it not, M'sieur?" appealing to Heminway for vindication. Which pleased Lamartine for an hour after.

There were nights when they lost their way, break-downs that hindered them, rains that dragged them, all gay, gay, gay! Drake felt like a boy. He took every dare the little madcap flung his way. They were two of them, at least, children, with that delicious perilous addition of being grown up and knowing what countless dangers they were skirting each hour of the twenty-four. Lamartine excited Heminway. She was not a woman to inspire self-control in any man. He felt she would stop only at the conventions. That was the only limitation she implied. Lady Letty shut her eyes to whatever went on in the tonneau. She may have regarded him in the light of a Peace Conference, intervening to avoid entangling complications elsewhere, notably in the direction of her husband. Certainly the Bemmesleys were reviving an intimacy suggestive of the honeymoon, symptoms of which were not to be ignored, and were the subject of much diverting comment on the part of their belle-sœur behind their backs. More than once she shrugged, saying to Heminway provocatively, "The English women

are not able to make the flames. They submit,— they do not rebel. They do not affect their men, they are affected by them. It is a mistake.” He kept himself in check pretty well until the night they two driving ran the car across a railroad bridge, three seconds in front of the Paris express. As they struck an intersecting highway, the headlight was upon them. They looked at each other in the glare, not eyes to eyes, but at each other’s lips.

His were white and resolute, set and calm. Hers were red and eager.

“If we had slowed up a bit —” he said.

“Helas! If we but had!” she returned.

She wanted him to know then, what he supposed he must have known all along, that to her excitable nature, meeting the end of the end, with him, was less undesirable than lived out apart in the eternal afterward. The night they got into Lucerne on their return trip, they ran long after dark into a private park. The gates were open, as though they were expected. It was not one of the great show estates but a modern miniature chateau, resembling some pleasure phantasy built outside Paris for a capricious woman by an indulgent lover. It commanded the entire length of the lake but was raised far above it on the green hills. They had conspired to surprise Heminway at Lamartine’s request.

“Where are we?” he asked.

"Chez nous," she told him. This was indeed her home, a summer retreat originally, now a refuge for much of her year.

Here they were to drop her and go on by train. Their holiday was over. The car swung in, slowed up the steep curve and stopped. Percy Bemmesley was helping Lady Letty out. Lamartine had not stirred.

"Curtain," said Heminway, to recall her, "Last act. End of the season."

"La suivante saison ne sera plus si belle," she cried, but she rose and took up her rôle of hostess without an instant's further regret. Heminway picked up the book she had dropped without observing it, intending to return it to her.

The supper in waiting was a credit to her, and they did full justice to it. After it, on the terrace, it was Lady Letty who sighed—"To-night is our last, Duchess. Not a bad idea to have it here, more by ourselves than at an inn. The moonlight is perfect too."

"Their last ride together!" her husband inserted.

"Our last moonlight," Drake continued in her strain.

"If you say that word again I shall sing the last hope," their hostess threatened.

"Do sing!" begged Percy. So that was the way Drake heard her first. And then he felt as if he had

sat stupidly puzzling for weeks before a locked door that might have been opened to him long ago.

“The days are going to be long without you,” he told her in their brief interval of departure, while Percy cranked the machine and Lady Letty admired him.

To which she replied gravely, “Twice in the year there is one week when the days are equal to the nights. It is when spring-time commences and when the summer ends. Eh bien! these last days of September are sometimes so golden that certain of the trees deceive themselves and flower again,—but it is most of all the chestnuts—” she amended with a laugh, “and you are too polite to compare a lady to a chestnut tree, is it not so, Mister Heminway?”

He bade the Bemmesleys a radiant farewell next morning but did not go on with them as they had seemed to expect. He had no need of a pretext for remaining, as the National was overflowing with people he knew. It was a good season, so hot that no one cared to hasten away; every one lingering because others did, idler-fashion. He thought if the right chap turned up he might like to make a few ascents. He had been fond of that sort of thing once. Moreover Lucerne is not forbidden to any man. The nearness of Lamartine was not prohibitive. The promiscuousness of it all suddenly became an asset. Of course he knew and she knew why he

was there. What of it? The book she had dropped he had not returned yet. It proved to be a volume of poems. He had opened at a sufficiently striking phrase to invite closer attention —

“ Autour de mon corps las que ton image habite
J’ai porté tout le jour ton ardent souvenir
Roulé comme un ruban d’angoisse et de désir
Qui m’enserme et me précipite” . . .

And the torrents flung themselves down where the forget-me-nots never seemed to fade, through verdant meadows where the herd bells chimed like fairy music; and the feathery white clouds seemed to drift off the white-cowled peaks that were outposts of heaven, while the lake lay rippling to itself in the sunshine like nothing but Schubert’s Nussbaum, whispering to itself of “another year.”

Lamartine avoided the hotels. He could not prevail upon her to accept any of the invitations constantly sent up to her. She invited him to dine once, with other people, mostly French folk he had never heard of, and who made no attempt to catch or reproduce his name during the entire evening, with that charming inconsequence of the French, though they vowed themselves eternally enchanted to have met him when the time came for mutual adieus. Once again he went at tea time and was admitted, but so had all the world been before him. He had no chance whatever to — well,— no chance

to,— why, talk to her of course, get back to their free comradeship again. He missed the fun he had lost. He called again, but always there was the strictest observance of the conventions in some human shape that marred all conversational pleasure. He begged her to walk with him, up through those high pastures to the chalet far above. She granted him this, but failed him. Yet through all this barricade he felt she felt all he was feeling, and that if he cried with Rhodon —

“ Ah! quel effroi divin en mon audace hésite! ”

She would echo with Mélissa :

“ Mon coeur est comme un bois où les dieux vont venir — ”

How long were they to go on so, hiding from each other?

At last there came an afternoon when he found her alone upon the terrace. The wind was blowing venomously and she sat well back in an angle of the house to escape it. His own chair was close to hers, for protection also.

“ You are a very disturbing person, did you know it? ” he asked her gravely, after they had established themselves side by side as on a steamer.

It pleased her. She gave a little shiver. This was what she wanted from him. “ If you had said useless, yes, I would have consented, ” she said.

"You were made for a very definite use," he began, the excitement he always felt with her rising in his voice.

"The alliterative seduction of the Emperor's three K's — Küche, Kinder, Kirche?" she mocked.

"Woman's deadliest weapon is her femininity. You are not interested in feminism?"

"Not as you understand it. In England the feminist is a conformist; in France *hélas!* she is too often a rebel to both moral and social restrictions."

"Women should keep out of politics. Men hate their getting away from their own sweet place." He thought of Judith then, for an instant. But Lamartine was laughing. "So Napoleon thought. 'Since when have women been in politics?' was his question; and DeStael replied, 'Since the guillotine, Sire!'"

"You were made for lovelier things. Your voice—" she interrupted him, shrinking down perceptibly in her chair. Her mouth quivered, her eyes had their brilliance of unshed tears again.

"C'est juste. I was made for one, and only one end, as you would confess if you cared to say the truth," she said sadly. "My voice is only the art of it, its public expression. I am a child of passion. I was made for it, only. I can do nothing but love."

"You are unhappy without it?"

"Lost."

"You adore him still?" His jealousy was aflame at the idea.

"About as much as you adore your wife."

For a moment her audacity dazed him. Why should she not say it? What else had he given her to think?

"Listen to me," he said. "I am tied. You know it. I will tell you the story. You shall judge for me. I am in your power. You knew it before I did. Women always do."

She shivered again, then gave him the glance that had undone poor Percy Bemmesley. He read in it that she was already his for the taking.

At the close of what he had to say to her, she said simply, "And it is between fidelity to the letter of the law concerning a monster such as she, and a human woman who adores you, asking no return but love, that you hesitate all these days? You are a fool, cher Ami!"

"She is not a monster. She is an idealist, trying to make the world ideal."

"By all means go help the children dip out the lake with a coffee spoon!" she urged him. She had risen and stood turned from him, as if the matter was at an end. She drew him irresistibly. He waited but a moment, and she had turned back to him with her face uplifted—"if she is all that

keeps us apart—” her gesture was convincing. Heminway tried not to look at her mouth.

“She is my wife,” he said.

“So called. She does not act as if she were more. She lets you go to other women, which no woman does with the man she wants herself. She risks your passions and your life,—your happiness is nothing. Would she come if she knew precisely where you are arrived at this moment?”

“She would come if I asked her. She would do what she thought right.”

“That is not because she loves you!” her eyes blinded him.

“She would come if I sent for her,” he repeated, wondering if she would.

“Prove her then!”

“How?”

“Cable her at once to come to you. Use any reason to make it of the most urgent. Make her understand your life and loyalty are at stake. Make her understand, coûte que coûte, what it means,—the gravity of the situation, its import, in any way you best can originate. If she cables you she is coming—go and meet her. I lose.”

“If she refuses?” he trembled with excitement at the alternative. His nerves were tense, his hands burning.

She shrugged, giving him her brilliant smile.

He understood.

As he left her to send his cable, she told him, "There is a wicket gate at the foot of the garden by which you can pass. It is not fastened." From the way she said it, he understood.

He cabled at once at white heat —

Tired of playing fair alone. It is your turn. Come to me. Cable when and where arriving. Will meet you.

DRAKE.

He kept away from Lamartine while he waited. Any man can imagine whether he hoped or dreaded most. There was a side to Drake Heminway Judith had never seen or suspected. It was "up to her, now," he told himself over and over. The two men in him, one ravenous for easy pleasure in reach, the other faintly yearning toward a better self, strained toward their last judgment to be meted out to him by the woman who had accepted his name, his fortune, his devotion, and refused him herself. There is something to be said for Drake Heminway and for all the Drake Heminways the world over, whom women condemn wholesale; having themselves often driven them to the very sins they despise. Judith took her time. Not until afternoon the next day her cable came. He opened it in the office of the hotel. A crowd steadies a man.

Political situation here critical. Your presence important, mine necessary. Better come home unless ill.

JUDITH.

Without deliberation he stepped back to the telegraph operator and sent her another:

Please reconsider. Am well. Is this your final decision? Beg you to come.
D. H.

He wanted her to do it all. There should be no ground for misunderstanding. He would give her one more chance. In exactly twenty-four hours he had her reply.

My presence here imperative. Glad you are well.

JUDITH.

He strolled out on the promenade under the regular lines of trees and mingled with the passing throng for distraction. There are times when a man likes to masquerade even to himself. He waited till the stars hung close over the Alps, and the lake had a lap full of them in reflection.

He dined late with some people newly arrived who importuned him, and drank much with his dinner. When he left the town behind at last, the strains of the hotel band came after him as if arms were thrown up to him, arms that lured and strangled and pursued beyond escape. It would be too late for intrusive inspection of servants when he got up to the villa, too late for her to evade the penalty of her interference with his life, too late for regret or any mental or moral hold-up. She would see that the wicket gate was unbolted. He understood her

allusion to it. The voices of the torrent near called and warned, exulted and goaded him on. Since he had first met Judith he had not once given way and gone wild. To-night even she could not have held him back. Lamartine was the incarnation of all he desired. He had no wish to speak to her or hear her speak to him. He knew passion as the great intoxicant, muting all lips, drugging all thought or reason.

The night was very silent. Only an infrequent motor car going too fast to do more than streak the highway for a moment, then silence and the darkness again. He left the road for the mountain path. He was less than a quarter of an hour now from gratifying the tiger in him, long unfed. He did not anticipate or remember. He hurried upward. He reached the wicket gate. It was unbolted. He passed inside, drawing the bar behind him to make it fast.

Drake Heminway had reverted to type.

CHAPTER XV

ON THE ALTAR OF APOLLO

JUDITH went back to her work with a new insight and deepened perplexity. Though more than ever convinced of the need of her propaganda, how was she ever to cope with the traitor in every woman's breast? She could not hear the pitiful stories dry-eyed, and how was she to conceal from these girls who trusted her with their secrets that the weakest word they spoke found deceitful echo in her own heart? How hollow all her previous professions of friendship for them sounded now, when she knew how to measure their craving for love and colour denied them by the hard terms of their restricted lives, by her own longing for Julian. Duty might help to set her right. She could but try. The shrine she served should not be deserted though the curse of a love she had dreaded was upon her. She had hoped Drake might be induced to become permanently useful, demonstrating to the public the power of men of his own class on the right side. But as he gave no sign of intention to follow up any of the leads

thrown him, she reached out wherever she could to men in authority, trying to enlist them in her cause, to safeguard everywhere, to fight legalised temptation, not only where peril flaunted openly but the more insidious motor-car and incidental road-house. As time passed and no definite word came from Drake, she was puzzled, then humiliated. She was too proud to speak of it and in daily dread of being questioned. She had refused herself the great blur of joy her letters from Julian might have been, and Drake was voluntarily silent. What did it mean? She kept an undimmed front to the world, but her face began to show the strain as the winter set in. If Drake had come and opened his arms now, she might have found a life refuge within. With women the element of the opportune has a force quite unsuspected by men. The man and the moment can work miracles with these inexplicable creatures of dust whom neither reason nor passion can swerve from their course. Argue a woman into an agreement and she will often repudiate her decision in deed, but catch her in a responsive mood and coerce her, she is a slave to her momentary admission.

Judge Cassidy, now her most trusted friend and adviser, watched over Judith with an increasing certainty that something was wrong in her own life. He encouraged her in coming to him whenever she would, hoping it might be easy for her to speak

to him of her own affairs when the right time came.

He had observed humanity from many sharp angles and felt sure that tragedy is but a passionate impulse meeting a material opportunity, the outcome of passionate weakness, not strength like hers. He was afraid the real tragedies were unwritten, and comedy far sadder. And once after Judith had kept him laughing through an entire interview, he found himself summing up her sentence from Fate in two phrases — Heroism endures, cowardice eludes; tragedy is death but comedy is imprisonment for life!

It was after a long talk over a desperate case, lasting from the closing of Court till the early dark closed in about them, that he said wearily, "You will find in the end it is the same always, Mrs. Heminway. Sex domination is the root of the great sins."

"But we are not going to give up just because we are tired of hearing it!"

"Not tired; seared with the blighting repetition of it."

"And all the trouble usually begins with such a little thing," Judith said sadly.

"Yes, some little thing always. The same story —" the Judge repeated, wondering if he dared say what he wanted to her.

"Oh, no! Never the same story," she shook her

head decidedly, "No two are ever alike, and the wildest imagination has not one billionth part the improbability of the Almighty. He varies the plot with each individual."

Judge Cassidy smiled. "Male and female created he them, then surrounded them with a psychological situation and ever since they have improvised variations." He was not thinking of the others, only of Judith.

"It is not always ignorance either," she said thoughtfully. "Wisdom does not seem to help much when the hour strikes."

He turned toward her as if hardly hearing her. "The Celts say wisdom and the shadow of wisdom, which is madness," he mused aloud.

"But about my girl," she insisted. "You will speak to the people who complained about her, for me? You will help her to one more chance?"

Instantly he became all the Judge, no longer the scholar and friend. "The girl you want reinstated will have to be removed. She is irresponsible,—the first symptom of disintegration. She indulges in an open friendship with a married man. It is ambiguous in any circle, to the people of her class it means only one thing."

"If she drops out of our influence and is sent away, you know what it will amount to," she warned.

"Yes, but she enjoys a position which only a girl of unassailable character should occupy. It

involves the confidence of other girls who consider her in a small way an example."

"We must make her fit to hold it!"

"I presume we shall fail," he replied, "I suppose there is one chance left. If she will give me her word she is all right, I will stake my honour on hers. Under those conditions probably she could be retained."

"I will bless you every day of my life, if you will. She is a girl I trust. To have her discredited is the hardest thing I have ever had to meet."

"Do not forget my condition—" he cautioned. "If she will swear to me the scandal is a lie."

"Of course she will!"

"I hope so, but will she, can she? If she has kept faith with herself she will, but has she?"

Judith's colour went as suddenly as it had come in response to his promise.

Had she, Judith, kept faith with herself? Even if society was not openly affronted could she take her oath to this stainless soul before her that she was innocent of offence? How would she face such a test as was being prepared for this other girl?

"I will go to her at once," she said, rising.

Judge Cassidy noted her pallor. "I do wish you would go away and rest," he urged kindly. "This is utterly unsuitable work for you and there is actual danger of your being put in serious posi-

tions, going about alone as you do to all sorts of places where you are not known. When is Mr. Heminway coming over to look after you?"

"He cabled me to come to him." She drew Drake's two cables from her pocketbook where she had laid them on their arrival and gave them to him.

"And your reply?" he enquired after reading them.

"You know yourself how every movement we had set on foot would have suffered, if I had not been here just at that time. The prohibitive legislation others were trying to put through for us needed suggestion at every turn. I did not answer without due consideration, Judge Cassidy, but it was a little too unreasonable to expect me to upset our routine and throw over all we had accomplished for a whim." She was inclined to scoff but he did not seem in sympathy.

"I wish you had asked my opinion before you refused," he said slowly.

"How exactly alike men all are! They see the woman's part always to have her life cut in two or pieced on, as proves desirable to them at the moment."

"This sounds vital,—to another man," he objected.

"Drake has been splendid to me all along. We understand each other without talking about it. We weathered our first storms with such an appear-

ance of calm that my sister Pauline has never forgiven either of us."

"All the more reason for your feeling these cables imperative, I should think." He was not going to see it as she did. It startled her.

"If Drake does not propose to come back and do what he is so plainly fitted to do does it follow that I ought to idle in Europe, just for external effect?"

"Could you not investigate foreign conditions?" he suggested.

"We both know what that amounts to; nothing done. We also know that hell is a condition not a theory, in our own city and almost everywhere else. We cannot plead ignorance of what there is to be done, your Honour!"

Still the Judge regarded her with those keen eyes of his. He wondered if he had the evidence necessary for a decision. Given such opposite natures as hers and Drake Heminway's it had been inevitable, had it not?

And she feeling his attention focussed on her personal affairs, wondered why he wanted her pushed back into Drake's power. Was it then a universal conspiracy? Why had not Pauline, or even Ferdinand spoken out? Was that what old Butler meant, when he said the married were like frogs down a well calling to others to come, just because they could not get out?

His voice recalled her, asking reluctantly, "Do you care for my advice, Mrs. Heminway, in a matter involving only your husband and yourself?"

"Can you ask me?"

"It is only this then, if your husband gives you another chance, take it at once. Go, without delay."

"You do not think he will, after my last cable?" He saw the beat of her heart flutter the filmy plumes of her hat.

"I said if he gave you another chance," he reiterated.

His face was so stern she heard again in memory the accent of the girl in white saying—"That's Ray Cottle,"—associated in her mind forever with his expression of abhorrent rebuke. Strangely enough his next remark interrupted her with the same subject.

"Do you remember those two young people who were in Court the first time I ever saw you?" he was asking.

"The girl who said, 'That's Ray Cottle?'"

"You do, I see. Her finish came last week. I sentenced her. It was not strange. She never had a chance. She was riding for a fall when you saw her."

Judith sighed. "Such a pretty young thing and she seemed so far above it!"

"Ah, Mrs. Heminway, that is the worst of it.

Those high up come to it too. And the higher up they start, the steeper their fall."

As the days and weeks passed bringing still no word from Drake, she grew hard toward him, because her own misgiving had a way of siding with Judge Cassidy. After all, Drake was a man. Habit irked him. What help was there for it? What had happened was inevitable. Every one had said so from the start. She knew it herself, now. It is only in life that the inward crisis and actual turning point are met without external demonstration. Only in life are the staggering blows taken in silence, unobserved by those who stand nearest. Let tragedy strut applauded, it is only in life that we do not act in our supreme ordeals, but wait doggedly. Patience, never cast for the acting stage, becomes the leading part, and we move onward not trying to outrun the weary march of the days; blindly presuming there is design in our interminable progress, and a General at the head of our column intending something for ultimate good. Judith moved on, after her talk with Judge Cassidy, in much this attitude toward the outcome of their present situation. Her work saved her from brooding. Other women under similar provocation might lie in bed and dream over cruel or ecstatic moments, but here she had a man's salvation from morbidity, since never a morning found her free for indulgence of leisurely hours and her sleep was

sound from sheer exhaustion when her exacting day was done.

On Christmas eve she received a cable. It was dated Ostend. The message was a single word, "Love." It was not signed. Was it from Drake? Her heart leapt to the hope that it was Julian's.

In April Drake wrote from a provincial town in France. He had been in a bad motor spill early in the season, laid up in Brittany ever since, off his head, or he would have come or written her long ago. How would she feel about coming over now, for a few weeks? Could she be spared? There were matters of importance awaiting her word. He was not very fit yet, both legs had been broken and he could only hope at best to be moved to Paris in a fortnight. It had been a bit forlorn being laid up in the provinces. An hôtel was hardly home for an invalid. Still she was not to think of coming if it handicapped her in any of her projects. Some of Julian Craigie's relatives, friends of his own by the way, were to be in America soon and had promised to look her up and see about her sailing with them, if she cared to come.

She missed much of the old Drake in the letter. Was he keeping to himself how he was longing to see her? Was it a repentant and disgusted Drake, or merely a dutiful Drake still keeping his bad bargain perfunctorily?

There was now no hesitation in her mind. It

was only in a calm Judith's craft was liable to capsize; give her a stiff squall and she would reef and run like any racing cutter. That she must go to Drake was clear, whatever happened after he knew all she must tell him of herself. She had no need to ask Judge Cassidy's advice. She would not let herself think now. She would merely do the thing that lay before her.

Into her conflicting chorus of emotions came Julian's English uncle, his mother's brother. She found him waiting for her one afternoon on her return from a fruitless errand with the Judge. Her girl Isabelle had refused to consider his offer and resigned her position without a word. It had been a blow to Judith and occasioned her much subsequent anguish of spirit to watch the indisputably downward course of her former favourite.

The Englishman plainly found his errand more to his liking than he had anticipated. He adjusted his glass and scrutinised her as if she had been a mural decoration three starred by Baedeker, which he held in his left hand, improving his every moment for informing himself on the city's points of interest.

"I dare say you could tell one how to get to Grant's tomb, to the best advantage," he began impersonally, after their first exchange of greetings. "One must do it, and also the Palisades. Where are they? And the Battery? We are not so keen

for your art museum, but we do want a thoroughly reliable impression of your country."

Judith deprecated her ignorance of almost if not all his goals — while he read out various advices from his red guide book for her comment.

"Where are your battle fields?" he demanded. "One wants to have seen them, though you are so singularly deficient in armies,—" then he veered back to her, saying, "It was quite by chance my running across Mr. Heminway in France. He was at one of the touring club inns, after a nasty ditch. Some friends had promised to get him along to Paris as soon as his condition admitted, and as we were to stop in America only a week for the wedding of a friend, it occurred to us you might just happen to like to come along, under our wing, or flying jib, so to speak!" At which stroke of humour he laughed delightedly.

He did not inform her that this rather delicate mission of bringing Mrs. Heminway back had been most reluctantly undertaken by him at the warm solicitation of Drake and his lawyers. He felt a bit of a cad not to be more frank with her, but it was not his business, was it? He was no more implicated than the ship that carried her or the train that took her on. He was not going to prejudice her either way. If she wanted an escort, why here they were. He washed his hands of complicity.

If he had been surprised by her instant acquies-

cence, he little guessed the fury it roused within. Her hatred of the confession that must be made, increased. She had no thought of concealing her fault. She would leave it to Drake to decide. In the eyes of the law and society she was his. To be a reproach, to set a bad example to her girls! It was something under which to writhe even in fancy.

Why had she not remembered them, that night when she had taken the short step into love's garden with Julian? Was she really any better than the weakest of them? Did they not all say it was such a little thing at first? Drake must decide. With all her conviction of a vocation it was she, not he, who had failed; she who had not played fair, who had given the false measure she professed to despise. She must not dare lay claim to one moment of his praise or honour. Oh, it was hard! But life it seemed had only some brief moments of rapture for a few chosen ones, and hers were behind her now. And she must go on. She must go on to Drake, go back to Drake. Go back? Who ever did go back?

Well then, was she a woman to go on alone? To take the always single path over the horizon? Some man would surely try to walk with her, as her shadow if not her mate. This, experience had taught her. Judge Cassidy said a divorced woman was prey. At least Julian should respect her. If she had proved incapable of shaping her life for

herself, she would walk in the shelter of her husband's name, cost what it might. Julian only knew the dearness of the provocation for her failure in perfect truth, for he only was associated in it, and who could so fondly excuse?

"I can't tell you how jolly I find your decision," she heard her visitor saying in the midst of her own reflections. "It's splendid of you to come right along without any bother. It is more like a man than a woman, if you permit me the indiscretion."

She could not kill him, or herself; she felt her duties as Drake's wife begin again officially with the smile which she turned upon him as she gave him her hand.

"That is very nice of you, but of course it was a foregone conclusion if my husband needs me," she said serenely, without one betraying accent.

"Er,— oh, naturally! Of course!" he assented. Saying to himself "Nerve, by Gad! Superb creature! One does not blame Julian. What if she had been a bit — well obstinate, indiscreet even, whatever one chose to call it. Who was not, if they looked like that, and men were about? Lord! if one was young, would one go cold on a woman like this one for a pair of red lips and an easy indulgence? Heminway was an ass! Damn Julian too, for a white livered eremite! What did he mean by letting this happen on the start? Where were his own eyes? What fools both these men

had been! Who was the lucky dog she kept up her sleeve, anyway? He believed now he came to think of it he had never been told that part of her story. He still stood stupidly, trying to think of something clever enough to say and found himself actually gone and out on the doorsteps while still in a quandary about it; then he came back again to repeat, "So awfully jolly of you to see it this way."

"There is no other way to see it. My reason for being here is not sufficiently important at the moment, to keep me from the other duty to my husband."

"Deucedly jolly for us! You are sure you are quite equal to the effort of coming so soon?"

"There is no reason for delaying. I am brilliantly well," she said.

"Capital!" he commended heartily, "Then I will get back to the inn and do a bit of sightseeing with my wife. She will think it no end jolly you can sail with us. She is fretting to be back for a houseparty before the month is out. We want to make the *New York*. Winifred and I will be as good as the man from Cook's. We'll put you on to all sorts of ropes, crossing."

"The *New York* sails on Saturday?"

"The nineteenth."

Mentally she supplemented, of course, Drake's nine. The number he was superstitious about.

"To-day being?" she asked aloud.

"The fifteenth."

Of course. Julian's five. The coincidence interested her, idly.

"I dare say you could not really make it?" he said dubiously.

"Perfectly. I had only to decide. That I have already done."

"My wife will be delighted," he repeated, "though she will lose out. She wagered you would not make it. We heard such a lot about you. I forget your fad, something about girls and their wrongs, is it not? Winifred now is keen on orchids. It is awfully desirable for women to have a fad, don't you know? If they don't carry it too far. It keeps them young. You will find each other congenial in that way. She has no end of ideas about orchids. She has them from every corner of the world where we have ever spent a night. That is, where they grow at all," he amended. "She will want you to come over to England and have a look at hers, down at Beauchamp, our country place. It is not much in itself, but her orchids are rather special." He left her much impressed by her beauty and somewhat stirred by the injustice of it all.

"What eyes, what a form!" he somewhat inelegantly expressed it afterward, to his wife, in whom he heartily trusted. "Sent me off as if I

had been a fly, on her wheel instead of an uncle of Julian's on a mighty ticklish errand. Royalty could not have dismissed a black Burmese better. A runaway husband and a deserted wife like that! Julian is a crown-fool!"

To which she made her customary noncommittal response —

"Oh, come now! My dear Harry —"

"You wait till you see her!" he retorted this time.

"The poor thing," she cooed, with disparaging sympathy.

She had a set of remarks she made to him, suited to all their varied emergencies. He would as much have put up with the forms of Common Prayer jiggling to a street tune as any variation in her responses to his frequent outbursts. It was one of the secrets of their mutual bond.

CHAPTER XVI

PLAYING FAIR

THE voyage was one variety of astonishment to Judith. It was all so new to her it seemed to leave her previous life a blank, at first. It dwindled like an object tossed over and left behind. She felt oddly cut off, irresponsible, remote in space as some solitary star swinging aloof from its fellows and shining for its own unknown reason. The English people who had been everywhere and crossed everything, were happy in her inexperience. They compared Red and Black and Arabian and Yellow seas complacently, for her benefit, noting Atlantic peculiarities and Pacific unpleasantnesses of their previous voyages; while she saw misty cities rise on the limpid afternoon horizons or dimly felt eternity begin where the grey waves broke from the side of the ship into infinite distance. She afforded them variety in the general tiresomeness of one mere crossing the more, for which they were frankly grateful. Without in the least intending it on the start they had got deeply interested and pressed her to visit them at Beauchamp as soon as ever she crossed to England.

"The sooner the better, you know," Julian's uncle had assured her.

"You will be coming along soon, I assure you. Paris is very tiresome at this season," his wife had reiterated, adding, "You had far better come along with us now, and let Mr. Heminway follow you up when he is able. Come along! Do now, why not?"

But Judith had insisted that she must go first to Drake, but would soon come to them either with or without him, for a week or so of England before she returned. The night before landing threw her into a panic.

It is one thing to think about living and another to live. If the ship would have obligingly gone down, or if she had been able to think of jumping overboard as possible, it would have been a way out of the slow torture of her own mind.

She went ceaselessly back and forth over past and future, without conclusion. Drake had loved her and been splendid to her a long time. He had waited and obeyed and kissed her glove. She owed him much, probably all. Julian had swept her off her feet in an instant. In the finest sense of honour her husband ranked above her lover. This in itself was a damaging admission. She knew, and so did Julian, that Puritan true-blue and "off colour" can never match. Yet as the hours shortened between her and Drake, all that held

her back from him came over her in a wild rush ; all that swept her toward Julian.

She grounded herself on her first conviction that there was something born in her for which she was in no way praiseworthy that held her here, in Drake's case. Whatever she might have wanted, here she was. Like the iceberg, she went against wind and tide by force of her submerged self : her subconscious Ego. Then came the riddle of how to tell Drake without betraying Julian? That, she never intended. Yet only the fact of its being Julian, her life-long friend, could mitigate her own abasement. Not to speak would be a living lie. She knew now that men allowed a liberty to themselves they would no one of them tolerate in women ; never to their own women, if even in theory they boasted a mutual allowance in accord with modern liberalism.

If Drake cared enough to want her back, would not her story arouse a vital jealousy inherent in the warp and woof of every man? Then married life could no longer exchange its peculiar preoccupations for impersonal interests. As lovers what resource had they? How could they hope to be each other's sole interpretation of life? No, a thousand times no! Only with Julian was such a thought possible. The kiss of Apollo that had cursed her had left him free. Having shared it with him, she could never worship at her old altars

again, and she was powerless to save him or herself from the result of that mad impulse. But was she powerless?

She saw pitilessly clear that his youth, career, tastes, religion, nature would recreate his life for him. She recognised his aversion to restraint, she knew that while he kissed the intangible fetters that bound them now, they would become fetters if she had not courage to strike them off. If she left this shadow life with his image for the substantial reality with her husband, it would not kill Julian, it would not blight him. On the other hand what would it do for her? And what would it do to his faith in women — in her? Her husband's conventional if spotted career was open to her. Who need guess what had happened? He would curse her for leaving him for another man. That would be where the screw turned for both. For him it would brand her as worthless. He could say with truth that she had taken him, used him, cast him aside,—as men do women. What meaner arraignment? And true!

She meant to be great in her self abnegation for all their sakes.

To quiet her own remorse she must make herself seem to soar in the guise of stooping. Yet absolute truth was due to Drake. He should have it. It should be part of her punishment to have to make him suffer, to hurt as women dread to hurt,

and know it was her fault. If he made it easy for her, if he was ready to exonerate and say as he used, "It is only Drake, dear, only your own best friend," she felt it would kill her, but she should die gladly to get out of the dream of untruth in which she had lived.

But would any man say it? Would any man accept a woman after such a betrayal of confidence? If not, would it not be better to only admit that she had made her own mistakes and saw them now? To show him she was willing and waiting to begin again on his terms? And if he refused,— what was there left for her? Cowards die, the brave live on, and to go back would be impossible if Drake discredited her. It was characteristic of her that she never once thought of her own external effect on him. It did not occur to her to trust to her beauty or try to heighten it. It was purely a moral question with her. She supposed it would be so with him.

Meanwhile Drake himself was in no enviable quandary. What if the sight of Judith did its old deviltry to him? He had been mad over her. He had not seen her for nearly a year. She was his wife. The fact she came to him proved that she accepted the situation at its true value, at least. It heightened the tension of his suspense that he could not walk up and down even, but must sit and let the blue devils prod him where they would.

His fever threatened too, and he did not actually get up to Paris until the same night his wife was expected provided her ship was in on time.

She was hours behind, as it happened. She had parted with her English friends in a grey dawn at Plymouth, in a gale which made the tender careen and all adieus brief. Some Americans had taken her in charge up to Paris. It was only a few hours away now. They were slow in landing at Cherbourg and their train did not set off till twilight. While still walking up and down on the platform, getting used to dry land again, she was presented to a stranger who was to occupy their compartment with them. He was a certain Doctor Moran, who had, as he explained, caught the ship and ferried over, having a patient to see in Paris unexpectedly.

"Mrs. Heminway?" he repeated, thoughtfully, on introduction.

"By your leave," said Judith, wondering why he seemed to doubt it.

"The name is familiar to me," he said apologetically. "I met some Heminways on the continent a couple of months or more ago. In fact we more than met. We collided. We ran into each other full speed, bows on, and locked horns."

"Was any one hurt?"

"Everybody. I am just patched up again, myself. The wonder is we were not all killed." He

said no more, but all the tedious night journey was unobtrusively attentive to their comfort, removing his belongings to the smoking coach to give the ladies greater freedom. He came back to them with some wine, at a junction, where the train waited interminably, apropos of nothing at all.

"Disaster seems to go with the name of Heminway," Judith remarked to him idly. "My husband has not yet recovered from a spill he got from his motor."

Again she was puzzled by the glance he gave her.

"At Deauville, was it not?" he asked. If she said yes, he had no need to ask if she was Mrs. Drake Heminway. But why had Mrs. Heminway grown tall and blonde and American?

"Yes, I think it was Deauville," she said. "None of the French names are familiar to me. I do not remember them as my sister would."

"It was in the French papers at the time." He turned away as he spoke. It did seem so too bad.

It was past one o'clock when they finally reached Paris.

She left the train with a fainter hope even than that with which she had left the ship. Paris; was there no loop-hole of escape? If Drake rejected her, would Julian share the man's light regard for a disloyal woman? Her girls—Reverdy—As Catholics hold the crucifix to their breast, she held his image now before her dizzy eyes.

Her travelling companions saw her safely settled at the hotel where Drake was established. His man was waiting up to explain that Mr. Heminway had not been as well and the doctor advised against his being disturbed until morning. She heard his messages and left her own to be given him with his coffee. She fell asleep before she had a chance to think. It was noon when she wakened. A soft-voiced clock chimed it out from the adjoining room. She hastily made herself presentable in a *négligée*, not stopping to dress lest Drake think her forgetful of him, and crossing the sitting-room that separated his room from her own, knocked on his door.

"It is Judith, Drake. May I come in?" she asked.

It sounded as if they had been living together every hour of the year past. "Come in, please," she heard him say. He was dressed but lay full length in a long chair, unable to rise without help.

"Forgive me for not opening the door for you," he greeted her, "my crutch is over there. I cannot hobble without it yet," motioning toward the window. She noticed he held a letter in his hand.

"Poor old Drake!" she exclaimed, realising all he must have gone through alone. She thought he acted a little embarrassed. She stooped and laying one hand on his shoulder, would have come nearer but that something in his manner arrested her. It

seemed to her he shrank from her touch as she had so often withdrawn herself from his own.

"You are looking wonderfully well. That white lace thing is very Grecian," he complimented. With troubled eyes, she began then to ask eagerly of his condition, his accident, his slow weeks of recovery; while he seemed equally anxious for details of her voyage,— who had crossed with her, if she had been ill,— who had brought her on from Plymouth,— how had they made out at the customs? Had she found her letter from Pauline? There were several for her.

She supposed he was trying to put her at her ease, to slur over the strangeness of their being thrown so intimately together in a strange land far from all that was familiar or reassuring. That was like Drake; always sparing her, always keeping his contract to the letter. He was far finer in every relation to her than she had been to him; she, with her ignoble secret clasped to her breast. Illness had refined him too. His face robbed of its high colour of perfect health glowed with something more spiritual than she had seen there before. The features formerly a little coarsened by high living had regained a clean cut vitality very attractive. His abundant chestnut hair showed no least abatement where it was parted evenly on the low full brow. Drake was better looking than ever. His eyes were full of a new light never lit there before.

Judith saw it with remorse that increased with every passing moment. How splendid he was and how fit for all that he was waiting to give her, and how utterly unworthy she was of such a gift, and how false she was to him. She had betrayed him in her heart. She was carrying Julian there, this very moment. No *man* was capable of such duplicity. How to tell him? How to break it to him, that she could not love him, now or ever, because she had let another man take possession of her imagination?

And to tell him when he was ill, dependent, longing for her. Remorse sharpened its claws on the situation, refining every phase of delicate suffering she had previously endured.

They lunched in her sitting-room, where the noise of the streets came up through the open windows, relieving the situation somewhat as the interruption of music might.

The day was warm for April. The Bois would be almost like summer, he told her. They chatted on of Paris and their friends, never dropping below the surface. When the table had been removed and he was sure she was rested, he smoked for a time in silence, deliberating, while she looked down into the Square below.

If she had met and travelled with Doctor Moran, what might she already know? He felt it not wise or kind to hesitate. She would despise him, no

matter what his motive, if he kept her an hour longer in ignorance of their real relation toward each other. He threw away his cigar and held out his right hand to her —

“Judith, will you give me your hand on it that you believe I have meant to play fair?” he said slowly. She turned away from the window. With equal solemnity she put her own in his.

“If that was all — if that was only all there was to it,” she said sadly.

He thought that was what she said. He was not sure, she spoke so low. “I did not expect you, you know, not really. It was wonderfully kind of you to come.” His own voice was rich and warm, not broken. “If you had come before,— it might have been less hard for us now.”

“I have come now because I need you now, and it is only by helping you I can help myself.” She did not flinch under his gaze.

“You need me?”

“Yes, but that is not all.”

“No, that is just our trouble. That is not all, not nearly all between people who marry. We made a blunder, Judith, you and I, without either of us meaning any harm, perhaps. I ought to take the blame for I was older. But I trusted to just the knowledge of women which ought to have warned me. I for one am eager to retrieve it.”

This was the time for her to speak. Her lips

were dry. She bowed her head as if in accord with his suggestion. As she did nothing more, he continued, "I should not have dreamed of asking you to come to me if I could have gone to you, or if my reason was not imperative. This is the only thing I have ever asked you to do against your will. I hope you will not find it too hard to condone, afterward."

"Afterward?" she repeated.

"We need not pain ourselves by going over it all. There is too much to be said, to say anything, really. I was yours for the making. You did not love me. I knew it. You pretended nothing. I thought I could make you because I had made other women. I failed. I hope I have not been a brute in pressing you to come here. It seemed, at the time I wrote, the only way. I could not go to you and as I said my reasons were most urgent, I want your freedom legally arranged at once."

Even then she faced it, unflinching.

He saw she did not at all comprehend him. He would have sworn she was struggling to adjust herself to some conflict within herself, not to his startling statement. "It is the only attempt at playing fair there is left me."

"Drake stop—wait—" she entreated. "You have played fair. It is my fault. Will you give me another chance?"

"Do you want one?"

"Yes."

"Why?" He drew a quick breath.

"For every reason."

"You mean you have begun to care?"

"Oh, no, not that, but I will do all I can. I swear it. I will try to be all a wife should. Reverdy made me see it all. I will begin over. It is so terrible, this you want to do. I am appalled by it. Is there no appeal I can make to you? Do not leave me to myself, not yet, not now, not here, not in this strange place defenceless where it is no use for me to call upon associations of good to reinforce me."

"I am no longer a protection. Unless you love me, Judith, there is no appeal. It is too late. And if you did I should regret it now, for I am bound to another woman. I shall marry again as soon as it can be arranged. You do not care for me in that way; another woman does. You had your own reason for marrying me, quite different from, quite innocent of, the urge of nature. Your passion was for befriending the fallen. The woman I want to marry, and I, are just simple natural man and woman. We are unashamed. We do not expect to save the world but we do want to do all we have in us for each other. She has suffered bitterly. I want to set it right. How can I hope to make you understand what a man and woman feel for each other, you, who are sexless, above and beyond all such considerations? You are uncorrupted by our

lower longings, we are merely human. I cannot attempt it. I have a right to do this without your consent or approval. If you wish to keep me from it there are ways by which you can, but I am sure you will not. Our sort of love is ignoble to you, a concession to the animal instinct. Still I had dreamed I could make you feel it. I was honestly doing all I could to make you, surrounding you with every snare my heart could devise,— and you shrank from me. I saw you were glad to have me leave you. When, after weeks of living by myself over here, I knew a part of me had escaped to another woman; in order to be honourable, to take no first misleading step without first trying to do what was manly by you, I cabled you to join me. You know what your reply was, both times.”

Still she did not speak. The clock struck the hour of three.

“Amiel says in Hell it is always three in the afternoon,” she said, wincing.

“Don’t judge yourself, dear. I shall not. You have played fair by your own standards, and judged by my own, so have I. Why need we part in anything but kindness?”

“By our own standards,—but how have we lived by the divine standards?” she was very pale now. Suddenly all the light left in her seemed to flicker and fail. Her own failure in conduct smote her.

He was certain there was something behind her manner. Something he did not get at. But that she must be glad to be rid of him as a husband, he could not doubt, except that it tripped her on her own principles. And a woman's conscience is less capable of compromise than a man's, because it sees only right and wrong, applying a moral principle to questions which deal not with morals but expedience. Drake was a good Greek in holding anything moral that did not make for human misery.

"Is there no alternative?" She got it out at last.

"Why should there be? Unless you love me,—and I should be sorry if you did, for even then, as I told you I should still be bound to Lamartine by every tie of Nature. We both adore children. The French women care only for men and maternity, on their own admission."

She stiffened like a dead thing. "I beg your pardon for my stupidity. I was deceiving myself. I did not understand," she said, with frozen lips.

"Neither did I, when I asked you to come. I did not know myself, what I have since been told. I only intended to tell you that I had made a false step, such as many men make in silence, but which I felt had proved me unworthy of your confidence. I was meaning to ask you to decide whether you wished a separation from a whitewashed sepulchre, or not. Events make it necessary for you to be clear of me. You will be entirely free to marry or

not as you wish. You can divorce me on any terms you prefer. I shall make no contention. If it is possible to arrange any form of settlement with Lamartine's former husband, my friend Percy Bemmesley will do all he can toward it for us. Then our child will have a right to its name. If not, I have told you the truth and given you back your freedom. Yourself I cannot return since you have never wasted it on me. I may have hoped, man-fashion, that you might overlook, and it might come out differently. Only this morning her letter reached me—" he paused—" Now I have no sort of right to anything from you,— to anything except the future I prepared for myself in my reckless mood of late autumn."

"No one told me. I was in ignorance of the relation in which you stood to any woman but myself. Of course, as far as I am concerned you are free. As far as I have the power I release you from this moment. Please ignore my attempt to thrust myself upon you."

"Judith,— don't hate me!" he begged.

"Hate you? Oh, no, I only hate myself," she cried.

"You will always be my very dear Lady, and I wish you could think of me as your best friend." It was worse than he had ever imagined it would be.

And even then she would have told him, in fair-

ness, all her year's tragedy, except that his weakness showed how he had overtaxed himself already. And was it likely that anything concerning her would matter to him?

Since this was so, why defame Julian? She knew why Doctor Moran had stared at her. She had no husband. She was one of those women, now. Her sense of humour showed her the comedy of those infidels who scoff at a last judgment, when hers had overtaken her in broad daylight, at exactly three in the afternoon by a gilt clock, on a sunny April day, in the gayest city on the earth.

What she meant to do she had no idea. Paris was Bedlam. This whole story of Drake's was but part of the confusion and noisy inexplicable streets. She would stay no longer than was necessary to get a courier maid and set off for anywhere. Not to Pauline at Aix les Bains,—to some English-speaking place, where she could think out what Drake said had happened to her. She crossed the channel that night. Later she would — It went blind there. Vaguely she recalled the urgent kindness of her English friends. She had been going to Beauchamp. She clung to that former reality as one does to any fixed point during a period of lost equilibrium. Before sunset Doctor Moran took his patient away to the suburbs. They left no address. The suite they had occupied was taken by another

man and woman. When the gilt clock struck the half hour, she called him to her to ask —

“ Tell me since when, Georges, did clocks strike in heaven? ”

CHAPTER XVII

AT BEAUCHAMP

LADY IVERS was happy in having effected one more of her hair-breadth connections with her own guests as she arrived at Beauchamp, exactly as she had planned a month before, without an hour to lose. There was always fascination for her in, so to speak, dropping in on her own entertainments; the more elaborate they were to be, the greater the excitement in being casual. One hour's lee-way was as good as a thousand to her, with the added thrill of the possible failure to be on hand as her house party assembled, in case her own ship should just happen to fall behind previous records. On this occasion she had actually preceded all her guests by a half day and was soon telegraphing substitutes to fill places left vacant during her absence in America, by sudden death and kindred emergencies unforeseen a few weeks previous.

The only element of annoyance in the present anticipation was that Julian, who had been keeping bachelor hall there until the night before and who

was still conveniently in the near neighbourhood with a man friend, refused to take the place of a delinquent Guardsman, who had got a fall and disabled himself for society. In vain she telephoned and would have motored over and brought him back by force, this culprit nephew, had not fate played up and the son of another friend wired for permission to bring along a man he was holding off from a yachting trip until his own dates were free to accompany him.

“Wasn't there something between him and somebody else last season? Name is familiar enough,” said the host-elect.

“How is one to know who he is, or who objects to meeting him?” cried Lady Ivers.

“Or whose ex-anything he may be or who he has to fight shy of? Pretty rum crowd most of them; been there and back, one might say!” was her husband's observation as she numbered over the party to him in its final form.

“My dear Harry —” she began.

“Only needs Julian and Mrs. Heminway to make the Court calendar complete,” he said, with a laugh.

“He absolutely refuses.”

“Well, rather!”

“I am sure Harry — one does not in the least see why you take that — there is no reason for you to so —”

The entrance of a servant confused her finish.

Lady Ivers took the telegram he brought, saying, "If it is another failure I shall be too put out. It is really very tiresome of people!"

Her husband waited till she had read it several times with a running fire of comment uncalculated to enlighten him.

"Well?" he suggested.

"It is that inane Maud, to whom your cousin got himself engaged. She says she has the measles. So like her to have a contagious disease, when I want her here to fill out. It is so perfectly in character: it puts her so in the right in refusing at the last moment!"

"Somebody else will turn up," her Harry encouraged.

"One does not especially care to have somebody turn up. One wants one's friends."

"Wire Mrs. Heminway, then. Why not?"

They looked at each other. Both felt the Paris episode would be a brief one. Neither communicated their discovery to the other except by this mute medium.

"She would set all these girls by the ears who are coming," he exclaimed, putting her on by the amusement the idea afforded him.

"She might be by way of being glad to get away from Paris — it is really very tiresome at this season," she agreed, recognising nothing further.

Into which vortex of complications came Judith's

message asking if she might take them at their word for a few days.

Their assurance was hearty. It was more, it was overjoyed.

Reckless reflection showed her that she had lived out her own ideals and found them wanting. She was going to Beauchamp because it was what she had been going to do before the catastrophe. She was also going in heroic mood; going as a mere woman because there was a chance, oh, but the dimmest, of seeing once again with mortal eyes the man of men. Drake's statement had left her morally free to admit what she had denied. She reeled under the reaction that had set in when she first grasped what had really taken place in their altered relations. She followed the impulse of the truthful, trustful girl Judith, not the mature judgment of the woman of the world. While duty held her to Drake, to think of Julian was a sin. She had put him from her, fought against his memory. He had always loved her, sought her, belonged to her. Of course he would not change. Now, she was free to go to him, to go where she had denied even her dreams a right of way. Reverdy was dead and her belief in life impoverished, but Julian, thank God! was alive and hers, just as she was his, forever. "We belong to each other" had been his constant cry. The first day no mention was made of that name for which she listened.

Most of the guests seemed on easy terms of intimacy with the house and each other. They knew and Judith soon found out whose brothers were divorced and whose cousins lived amicably apart, and everybody seemed so happy and wholesomely devoted to sport and the open-handed well-being of life lived as one goes, that her own experience assumed less sinister shape. Scandal was a careless vagabond here, no morbid criminal. Divorce was commonplace carried off in so breezy a manner that it lost half its nastiness, revolting to her in the type she had encountered at home.

"Marriage is a superstition, a relic of the dark ages," she heard one man say, and no one contradicted him. It did not change anything for her, of course, but it temporarily smoothed the way that was distorted beyond sanity.

It was at tea time the second afternoon that one of the men spoke of having just seen Craigie.

Up it came to the surface like any name. Everybody caught at it.

"Ripping talent!"

"But such a sad recluse of late."

"Is he in England then?"

"What brings him over?"

"Where is he stopping?"

"They used to call him a woman hater."

"Why did you not have him, Lady Ivers?"

"Do ask him now!"

"I have." He turned us down," their hostess replied, at which Judith's heart tugged. He still cared then. He was avoiding her. She was sure he knew she was there from the way Lady Ivers' eyes met her husband's, after she had spoken. They two had an enviable system of communication with which she was familiar. Her own eyes may have showed her eagerness for it was her host who asked next, "Where did you say you ran across each other?"

"With Father Hunniwell. He is here at his father's place. The old boy is near his finish. Julian and he were chums, they tell me, long before their passion for the red woman of Rome attacked them. They are both leaving almost at once."

Before the next dinner party Judith dropped a hint that might show Lady Ivers her interest in seeing her playmate of childhood again. But it was fruitless. The evening brought forth no Julian.

"But he will have to come soon, for most of his traps are still here," Lady Ivers threw out.

Then she was glad she had not mentioned the day of her own departure as fixed. This visit had been a revelation to her of his former world. The environment of his impressionable years, from which of course he had reacted. She felt the same inclination herself. It was loud and kind and gay and free, merrie England up to date. Horses and dogs, and birds to shoot, and motor cars and eating predominated. It was not a life to charm and hold a

man like Julian, with his predisposition toward art and ideas, the unseen and forever alluring power of the unknown.

He would not come. She smiled to herself, realising why.

Fondly she mused on his probable state of mind. He knew she was near. He would not be played with. He took her seriously, knowing her best of all. He had, in all likelihood, read of her in the various journals that recorded her work and its progress. He had been proud, perhaps. Ah, but she was going to make him more than proud! When they met he should find her not only his Judith of the past, but a new Judith, undreamed by either.

She set off through the park the next morning even a little sorry to hurry the exquisite pause before their great moment of fulfilment she knew must be on its way to them. Of course they must meet. Neither could or would prevent it. There was no haste. The inevitable need not scurry like a frightened rabbit. This morning the skylark was akin to her mood. How radiant the hour was and how much better Nature knew than women prating of ideals and opportunity.

She walked sweetly musing through the shadows of the great trees, wrapt in her dreams. There was something sad about the end of anything, even if it was the beginning of something else. When Julian

knew she was there and had no objection to seeing her, it would be all over with this breathless hour of coming light.

All compunction had gone. She seemed capable of only the one certainty. He was near. They should meet. She had no further duty to Drake.

She stumbled on the root of a giant yew and regaining her balance saw him before her.

For a moment neither moved or made any sign.

Had not decency forbade he would have turned and gone even then.

She saw that. It was like him.

Detained against my will and better judgment was written all over him.

She put out her hand. He could not withhold his own. The tips of his fingers were all he gave her. They felt like arrow tips, a dainty determined offering more frigid than complete denial, which might have argued for continued warmth.

"How do you do? Were you on your way to us?" she asked, ignoring his manner.

"You see I meet you half way," she chattered on, but her voice was nervous. It had shaken her to confront, in a flash, those features seen in her dreams and endeared by maddened, unsatisfied memories.

He was adorable, peerless, her man of men. He was all and more than her heart had claimed for him. She had overestimated her strength. She

was under his feet in an instant, as completely as ever he had been under hers when she had sent him away twice, forever, without looking back.

There was no use in fighting it. All the world said so. Nothing could hold a woman when the one man compelled her.

"I hope Lady Ivers is well," he was saying, groping in commonplaces.

"Oh, yes, thanks, and your uncle too." Was that herself she heard speaking?

"The park is at its lovely best now," he assured her. As if it mattered!

"The whole wide world is at the brim!" she cried. Why falsify and stammer? Oh, the delirious pleasure of showing him that she loved him!

"Your work is unique and remarkable. I congratulate you on the happiness you must find in it."

"That is not in the least what I meant, Julian."

"You are indeed fortunate if you find other things equally good," he said.

She could not think she had roused one symptom of emotion. She was at loss. The lark's jubilate went up to the blue.

Perhaps if they walked instead of standing like statues it would help them find themselves.

"You were coming to us?" She turned as if to go back, with him towards the manor house. But he made no movement to accept the implied invitation.

"It is like the hill path under the chestnuts, at home, just here," she said, invoking mutual association to help her.

"I trust your husband is making a good recovery," he remarked politely.

She turned to him then. "Julian," she begged hoarsely, "spare me this farce. I have tried to live it out. I am more alone even than I supposed. For God's sake, spare me this last humiliation! You ruined my peace and destroyed my life. There is nothing pagan or Christian that can hold a woman who loves a man. You knew it. I know it now. You saw me at least intent on my vocation and you overturned my whole career. You found me at least flawless in loyalty to the man who married me in my ignorance of what love was; and what you left me — you also know."

"You left me. I did not leave you. I never would have left you," he said coldly.

"What does that matter? What does anything matter, any more? What are other women's souls to a woman whose own is on her lips for you, giving and exhausting life? You left me in the body but you haunted me. I did all I knew to forget you, submerge you, fight you off, be rid of you, be unfaithful to you. I wanted to revenge all women on all men by what I suffered, and always you were there, 'closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.'"

"Why do you confess this to me? I am not Reverdy," he reminded her.

"Reverdy never knew. That is my one comfort. I am a woman now, not a married child. I am not even the girl who repulsed you in the rose garden. She was a fool. I admit it now. Your kiss has demoralised the silly vestal, burned the Puritan at the stake. I am glad. Let the de-natured beings go their way. The curse of all women since the beginning is upon me, and like all the rest I exult. I have no Gods before you, Julian. The kiss of Apollo has made me mad. I know now why I was afraid to play that game with you. I must have felt it was no game, as every woman knows. Am I humble enough? Need I explain about Drake? He sets me free. He wants to marry some one else. Do you want further abasement?" She was on fire, her golden head gleaming like a challenge to the sun, her mouth fed his eyes, her throat lured to hidden paradise. She was his captive but a Princess of the royal blood still.

"Hush, Judy, oh hush! Do be silent," he begged, as if it strangled him to speak to her at all.

"Why, if you love me and I worship you?"

"For both our sakes, please stop," he implored.

"No wonder you do not believe it! But you said the day would come when a living love would be more than a dead Puritanism. It has."

He put his hand over her mouth as if he hardly knew what he did. "Be silent. You must not say another word. You shall not," he insisted.

"You do not understand, Julian. I am morally free. You cannot have changed. Lady Ivers has been a faithful gossip. There has never a breath of it come to me. And even if you have been for a little turned aside by circumstances, nothing could stand before my love for you. Oh, why are you so unforgiving?"

She came nearer to him. "Judith has bent her neck to your yoke, Julian. She does not ask to serve any altar but yours, as Nature and perhaps God intended her. My Beloved—"

He stepped back at that, as if afraid she would touch him, and his voice was colourless as his face. "If I walk with you to the house, it must be on the sole condition that you ignore the past," he said.

She stared at him. A dreadful shame overwhelmed her. She realised her soul was naked. "I do not understand—" she faltered.

"It is impossible for me to listen to you, or for you to speak to me as you have," he continued steadily.

"You mean until I am legally free? I did not stop to think of the proprieties. They seem so unimportant beside truth and life! If it was dishonourable,—I meant no harm. It was too much for

me, seeing you unexpectedly. I will go away now. I see how it seems to you. But later — some-time —”

He pitied her confusion, her breaking distress. He clasped his hands to keep them from comforting her, as he asked — “Is it possible no one has told you?”

“No one has told me anything. But nothing will make any difference. Nothing will change me toward you.”

Their eyes met and held. He averted his first. A light breeze set the shadows dancing round their feet. In the open near by the larks were rising. The world was very fair. They stood so, apart, yet communing beyond the power of touch or the heat of passion. At last he spoke,

“Judy, I am going to be a priest. I am going to follow my friend Father Hunniwell. Next to Reverdy I love him best of all men. Art failed me. I could not keep you out. The Church was all that saved me from self-destruction.”

She thought he said, “God be with you,— and with me!”

That night she lay like one pinned beneath a railroad wreck. She was not killed. She was stunned. She had an odd feeling of having no organs or substance, only her skeleton and the light breath that drew thinly through her being. On her eyes the

rose pattern of the muslin curtain border was printed, illumined by the passionless, dead moonlight. Toward the grey hours of hopeless dawn her heart became heavy, a hot weight in her side, but her eyelids would not stay closed. They flickered open, too weak to do aught but stare uncomprehendingly about the room. The rose pattern of the curtains came to seem imprinted on her eyeballs to prevent. A faintness came but though the body seemed to succumb, her mind lay empty and wakeful, listening to the endless march of quite disconnected memories and regrets. Julian, a priest — it paralysed her. Anything else. This was final. Julian had gone where no woman could follow him. He had given himself irrevocably to heaven just as she had discovered there was no heaven where he was not. The rose pattern of the curtains was no further from the actual roses of that summer garden dawn of his first avowal than her own soul from that of the Judith of yesterday.

CHAPTER XVIII

A REBEL

AT the close of her visit Judith had still kept her reserve unbroken. Every kindly attempt to force her hand was met by her with the colourless statement that their plans were not as yet determined,— or were as yet uncertain,— offering this slight variant as a wholly satisfying conclusion.

Uncertain! Her own plans were reeling about her like bats in the sunshine. Once when Lady Ivers had surprised her in her own room she had all but yielded to the traditional woman's need of confidence, and been chilled afterward by the narrowness of her escape. Her first impulse had been to accept their invitation to go with them to Norway and after on and on, out into space indefinitely. She might have been swept into the whirlpool of the suffragettes whom she met and whose bitter attitude toward men could not have failed to win a response in her present mood. But the sex equality demanded by them she knew for a temperamental fallacy. The man brought along in the Guardsman's

place turned out to be a person near to the ear of royalty, who promptly went down before Judith and who would have liked nothing better than to put her in touch with his own sister militant; assuring her repeatedly—"You and Mirabel would make a corkin' argument. The Government would throw up its cards if it saw you two after it." But as the pain and confusion of her situation became more bewildering, the need of familiar scenes asserted itself increasingly. This became the only point unsubmerged by the flood that had overwhelmed her. She kept her own counsel and as Lady Ivers admitted to her Harry, "Quite carried it off to the end,—poor dear." No one was informed when she sailed or by whose good offices or by what ship. In New York her landing was unheralded. She slipped back into her working routine as she had slipped out. As she drove from the pier to her own door, the same great iron girders were being hammered at by the same swarthy foreign arms, the same rails being laid by patient stolid foreign fingers, the same cavernous cellars being scooped out in preparation for newer, higher buildings. Gangs of toilers seemed here and there to be employed on just the same endless construction that was always going on. On all sides some sort of structure was being run up or taken down. The world went on where she had left it, with just the same slow stride toward eternity, leaving out hu-

man beings and filling up with new ones just in Nature's own imperturbable way.

The only person who had come to the top from her own inner world was Reggy Pennell. They ran across each other by accident and he had written to offer her any service, at any time. It seemed a rather formal thing for Reggy to do. She saw no reason for her needing any service from him so she had not availed herself of his suggestion. Pauline was to be abroad all summer with the boy, a frail little fellow taking the baths at Aix like any little old cosmopolitan. So after her first readjustment Judith got into the habit of running in every day to look out a bit for Ferdinand's creature comfort. The servants did better under some one in authority and Ferdinand had always been very good to her. He was very good to her now. He did not bait her with questions but assumed her being there as the natural thing and talked about something else, as men do with each other after a catastrophe.

Mechanically she took up her routine much as a man might after such an ordeal. She was not at the mercy of idleness. There were things to do at once. If she refused to use Drake's money, which was inevitable, retrenchment was imperative until her projects could be differently financed.

Ferdinand may or may not have mentioned her to

Pennell, but going in late one afternoon to give some orders suggested in Pauline's last letter, she met Reggy coming out. He opened the door for her as she was about to ring. They shook hands gravely. Her dauntless spirit abashed him as it had when she was a child. How dared he pity her, even in his own heart?

"If you are not going to stay for dinner with Ferd, may I wait till you are ready to go and walk back with you?" he asked after their mutual greetings.

"That would be very nice of you. I shall not have to keep you waiting long," she said. Erect as her figure was he thought she sounded wistful, almost grateful for companionship.

"Town is so much more solitary than solitude," he remarked to cover his own mood.

"That is what I feel so keenly for Ferdinand," she agreed heartily, "It is very good to find he has you to watch over him, too. Do you see him often?"

"I drop in on him if I have not happened to see him during the day. It is about all I can do for — any of you, now." She noticed his hesitation, turning away to her own errand without comment.

He waited in the drawing-room, desolate enough in its deserted splendour without the additional regret of association it was bringing him. The room,

swathed like some royal mummy, had been the living background of so many scenes he wished now had not come into his drama at all.

Judith was delayed longer than she had anticipated. She found him on her return sitting before the closed piano, one elbow on the covered keyboard, his head on his hand, staring at a silver Mercury prancing unabated with his imaginary message of the Gods. The emptiness of the place was almost tangible.

"Before we go, please sit down for a few minutes and let me talk to you," he said quietly, without rising, "we may not have another uninterrupted chance like this for a long time."

"There is not much to be said," she replied, still standing.

"All that has happened to you has made a wild man of me, inside." He spoke with entire self-control that heightened his sincerity.

"You know, then?"

"Yes."

"Does everybody?"

"They can, and they will."

"Who told you?"

"Ferdinand."

"He has never alluded to the subject with me."

"He never will unless you begin it. And you must know how I realise that I am the last man in the world to make love to you. But as a little girl you

waked something in me out of lethargy. What little character I have is your doing. I went to work because of you and have made something of a career, if not a striking one, at least I am not feeding from another man's hand. I don't know what you intend to do. I don't know that I love you as you want to be loved or ought to be loved, or that I could love you in the way you chose, but if you would only try to let me show you what love can be, to make up to you a little—if you would only let me show you how I care for you! I do love you, and in spite of everything I believe I might make you love me—”

She looked at him dispassionately, critically. “You are making a blunder, Reggy,” she said.

“I know it, but you are wretched; you are in the wrong before the world through no fault of your own. That is awful for a woman, Judith, and for those who love her it is unbearable. Oh you Saint, you Martyr, why should you let your life be ruined for an outworn creed, a threadbare Puritan conviction?”

“My life is my own affair,” she reminded him calmly.

“Of course I am not fit to touch the piano keys that have lain under your hands,—you are the one holy thing in my experience, a star way off in the top of the sky, and see what life has done to you!”

"Drake is absolutely within his rights," she said, without shrinking.

"Then why do you refuse to take yours?"

"The Church holds marriage to be a sacrament. It obliges one to swear till death us do part. Drake had to have a divorce. I do not want one."

"If you have lost your sense of humour, too —"

At that she hardened visibly. "It is like a man to expect me to be funny on the cross," she remarked as if she addressed the silver Mercury.

"No one feels as they used to about marriage," Pennell continued. "You are the only woman I know who regards it as more than a concession to society, as a sort of civil contract. Women are even proposing to do away with the form. Forever is too long a word between men and women."

"Not necessarily."

"I suppose it is just that very thing in you that is setting me wild. You are such a superhuman creature in spite of being the most adorably desirable of women!"

"You better not believe that, Reggy." She had walked a few paces, as if conflict stirred her. "I am not what you are professing to think me. I cannot let you honour a lie."

"I forbid you to try to tarnish the only ideal I ever held about a woman! Let me keep my supreme illusion. We will not talk about it now. Only get used to the idea that I have loved you ever since

you walked on the grass and got yourself into trouble,— a sin as innocent as the transgression you propose now, for which society will make you suffer. I want to be there to save your confusion, as I was before.”

She sat down opposite him at that.

“ I do not understand you,” she said.

“ No? Has not Judge Cassidy explained it all to you? ”

“ I have not seen him.”

“ Has no one told you if you let Drake divorce you and go on living like a culprit, what will happen? Will the world let you off? You ought to know better. You must let me be on your side, Judith. I want to serve you. I want to stand by you and avert the scandal.”

“ You, Reggy? ”

“ Paradoxical as it sounds, yes. Before the tribunal of society I am irreproachable and can offer you what you will most stand in need of.”

“ Impossible,” she said firmly. Her mouth was proud he noticed.

“ Is it your puritanism or religion that prevents your doing the only sensible thing? ”

“ Neither one alone.”

“ You must have some good reason.”

“ I suppose I have. It is rather confusing to explain because it is only my own and not that of the world in general.”

"Why should you bear the brunt of your husband's fault?"

"It seems silly to whitewash a sin after it is committed. We have all got to live it out. What use is there in gilding it over with legal seals duly affixed?"

"Then it is just because it is you, just the Judith of you, more daring, more truthful than other women, facing consequences without the aid of sham?"

"No, that is not all. I am just like other women. The hour has struck for me too."

Pennell sprang to his feet. "You cannot mean," he began.

"I care myself now, so I understand Drake."

He took it like a blow direct. What a tragedy it was all turning out!

"You care, Judith? You care? And does not Drake even suspect it?"

"It is not Drake," she said, without evasion. "You see, morally I have no defence. I stopped short. Probably because I am a Puritan as you said. He did not. The difference is not worth discussing. I am not going to pretend that it is."

"Then it is not principle with you. I have only come too late?"

"You have come too late in every sense and everything has come too late, even reason," she said without resentment. "I offered myself to another

man in less than a week after Drake had asked for his freedom. The Judith you knew exists no longer except as the little girl of your imagination."

"You know that is a lie, Judith!" He flung it at her, scornful of such low libel of herself.

"Not at all. I tell the truth. That is why it sounds so crude."

"It is impossible. You could not do such a thing. You have never loved, and if you did now,— you would wait for the forms, you would never declass yourself."

"Then what are you asking me to do?"

"Love like mine does not ask, it takes its own and is its own justification. You drive me beside myself with your indifference to your own fate!"

Then he went wild in words. She let him say what he would. After he had ceased his arraignment of all existing conditions,

"You have guessed rightly in one respect," she said, "the man I went to would not touch me. He had not the right. He will never have it now. The barriers between us are unassailable. I was already his in spirit. Something saved us the burnt-out afterward. Fate may be reserving us for something yet."

"You could be free in less than a year — and then —"

"It comes to this, Reggy, why should Drake not do as he will? If we are to tell the truth and noth-

ing but the truth, why not tell the whole truth? Why should we not both face it. It was my fault. On the start I was innocent of the offence. But now, if the Bible is right, I am a sinner already. If Nature and the time-spirit are right, I am an enlightened and progressive individual, taking advantage of a woman's inalienable right to love where I will. If the Bible teaching is wrong, then my brother Reverdy was a futile sentimentalist. If the grave held the love of my soul I might be like him, even now. But love is a living issue, for me, alive in so many more ways than I ever knew was possible, until a little while ago. In loving another man while I was nominally Drake's wife, I either sinned or followed the highest law of Nature. Half the world swears one way, the Church the other. The next century may change all that. But sin or virtue, the fact remains that I loved him: that I do love him. He is in me. I cannot fight it because I do not want to. I want to be a woman. I want the pain of it; all of it. I adore what I shrank from. I would hesitate at nothing, now."

"You are hysterical, Judith, you exaggerate terribly."

"No, I have only said what a woman feels sooner or later if life gives her a chance. I have met my mate and descended to the happy level of the peasant. I am what the modern feminist calls a para-

site. Say it, if you will, I know it is true. I am it, but the One who made me, made me so!"

"Good God! is this Judith?" he groaned.

"Yes, by God's fault or pleasure: not her own. I suspect this happens to most women, because we are born so."

"But with your mind and courage," he protested.

"With the one man in the world for her, a woman's mind gives way and helps her about as much as instinct helps the timid hen partridge elude her feathered captor."

There was a heavy silence.

"And he?" Reggy had not meant to say it, it slipped out.

"Oh, he is one of those few really blessed people possessed of that supreme egoism necessary to any success, even to the saving of one's own soul."

"You cannot mean he hesitates?"

"Not hesitates, ignores. A divorced woman, my dear Reggy, in the eyes of the Catholic church is prey only, not legitimate property. Even in our own communion a churchman may pity her, kiss her, pray for her, but never marry her, cherish her, or keep her good. The safeguards are all put round those within the married fold, who do not need them."

"As if he mattered anyway!"

"His vocation is to be a saint. As you said,

mine, I discover too late, is to be a woman. While I was Drake's wife, he was my lover; now that convention is overturned, I become one of those awkward outsiders, an intruder save that I shall never intrude."

"Saint? Prig, Bigot, Egoist!" he swore in whispers, not to shock her.

"You, Reggy, are too broad minded, too uncalculating to be cruel enough to hope to become a saint. One must consider oneself of supreme importance to arrive in any career."

"And you?"

"God knows what I am. I do not, except that I am a rebel. And the greatest traditions have produced the greatest rebels; I have read it in extenuation of Plato. The established order sanctions every evil and cloaks every sin, yet has so much that is splendid in ideal it strangles its chance for improvements."

A stray beam of light, piercing the glass above the front door in the hall, lit her face. He crumbled inwardly to see how uncompromisingly the war waged there had left its mark. In spite of her resplendent beauty she had aged.

"You are so young and life is so long before you," he sighed.

"Mona Lisa, Melancholia, and I were never young," she disagreed.

"But what are you going to do? You cannot in-

fluence your girls if your own heart contradicts your theory?"

"Temporarily I am substituting at our little hospital. The matron is away. I can do things with my hands. They will not contaminate."

"But eventually? Let me come in there! A woman behind a man's name is a cipher that raises him tenfold, but alone,— nothing. Forgive me for saying this, but you will find it is true. You cannot go on alone. You have no idea what you would have been in all along without Drake to keep the world at bay. If you must refuse yourself what you want most, go away, travel, forget, keep yourself out of what you will surely fall into here unprotected."

"And do you know me so little as that?"

"Forgive me. I did not mean to draw from you what I have. I meant no harm. I only wanted to help," he said gently, coming over to her and laying his hand on hers.

"And in return, let me be wholly frank. Your desire to reinstate me before society sounds oddly to me. I have spoken as I have to you because you aroused my first anger toward men, and my first glimpse of the untruth possible between men and women, in this very room. You and my own sister gave me the first terror of love's power, the first association of it with evil. Are you satisfied with the result? You have all contributed toward my

being the rebel I am to-day. I know that if I had not given false weights myself, you could none of you have hurt me. It is too late to discuss what might have been if Ferdinand or Pauline or you or Drake had told the whole truth. You are all exempt from society's cavi. You are all well within the law. I remember Martin, the Swiss butler, referred to that fact once."

"Is there nothing, no way — must I be only a curse?"

"All you can do is to stand by Paula. Ferdinand is fading out. She loves you, Reggy. If you love me you will not fail her. No, I mean, if you want me to think of you as a —"

"Brother?" he put in rather caustically. She shrank. He saw he had profaned the title no disillusion could reach. Grief held it shining, temptation could never blot it out. Her mouth quivered hopelessly, she turned hastily away to hide it. At the door she paused.

"Do not pity me, Reggy, it is no worse for me than all the rest. If it only were! If I could take it for them all! Be good to Paula."

He allowed her to go from him like this without a word, out into the darkening street, and stood staring at the single ray of dying light as it crept on up the stairs beyond where she had been standing, until the room was deep in night. He could not follow her indomitable spirit down through the hell

that must encompass it, without cringing. To see her head bloody and bowed, her soul conquerable, awed him. He had founded his one faith on Judith's being invulnerable to the fires of the world. He regretted much and cursed himself often before he let himself out into the street at last, uncertain where he was going or what he meant to do about it.

There was Pauline, as she bade him remember. There had always been Pauline ever since he came to the years that count in that sort of thing. That was just what was making her a self-evident, obtrusive fact to-day. Since there had been Pauline there could not be Judith. Still there was Pauline — and scant as such comfort was, it was the one little gleam in the general fog that settled over him. He went straight to the club and played cards with Ferdinand till bedtime.

CHAPTER XIX

A HOLY RIVAL

JUDITH soon found if she was to go on at all, with her former efficiency, there would have to be skilful financing of her projects beyond her own resources to provide. Where was the money to come from? The Heminway millions being out of the question, how was she to go on unless she was merged in some impersonal organised charity, or some individual was found to assume the responsibility? Women, she knew, gave spasmodically; men, she discovered, were cautious, and if impulsive, let her understand, not always considerately, that their interest was in her more than her crusade.

She went on doggedly in the face of every obstacle. Pauline, inconsolable at the course her sister had taken, was therefore unconsoling, so the sisters saw but little of each other. Judith always hoped that Reggy Pennell profited by her own retirement. She had modified her former method or lack of method somewhat, and now wore unvarying black, severe as the habit of an order. It was a

necessary protection in some of the places she found herself forced to go. This was the least of Pauline's despairs over Judith, but the loudest in protest. "Of course you know you look perfectly marvellous in black," Pauline discriminated, "but it gives me the shivers to never have you wear anything else."

"It is simpler," Judith offered in explanation.

"It is dramatic and it's fetching,— but you have no desire to fetch,— that is where I cannot make you out. You always were incomprehensible. We two are as unlike as if we were man and wife. What happened to Julian Craigie? Why he resisted you was always a mystery to me. When I heard he was to take orders and be a priest, I supposed I got it. The sort of man who cared for you would not be likely to care for another woman. I presumed he thought nothing but Heaven could make it up to him." She spoke impatiently. Judith had made such a mess of it all for every one!

"Julian was almost prepared to do the same thing long before now. He told me he all but decided upon it the last year Reverdy was in Europe."

"You cannot suppose Reverdy influenced him against it?"

"I think Reverdy might have. He and Father Hunniwell are the only men who have influenced him." It was simply said with no hint of evasion.

"Ferd says Father Hunniwell is talked of among men as a brilliant hope of American catholicism,

since he came to the Cathedral, but dangerously near the forbidden fruit of knowledge. His taint of modernism will leave him outside if he is not careful. We have some of his articles, shall I send them down, or have you never any time to read?"

"I will take time, thank you, Polly. Men like Father Hunniwell and,"—she did not say aloud Julian but inserted,—“others of his education, are not decadents to be swallowed up in mysticism. Father Hunniwell's brain will not be drugged and I should like to see him struggle to reconcile the unreconcilable. The taint of intelligence is the tragedy for the most sincere Catholic of the Catholics.”

“Where is the Craigie boy now?” It sounded guileless. It did not bring much response.

“I have no idea. Father Hunniwell speaks of him with bated breath. He seems to see a great future for him in the Church.”

“How well he will carry off the part!” cried Pauline. “First a bishop; then a cardinal! His distinction would become the pageantry of Rome.” She glanced at Judith and suddenly talked of something else. There was a smouldering fire beneath that frozen river and the name of Julian roused it, or Pauline was mistaken as never in her life before.

They did not bring up the topic again. Neither really avoided it, but to one it was as impossible as to the other impolitic. So Judith was surprised

early one morning to hear Pauline's voice over the telephone, just at the hour of her own market orders and appointments.

"Is that you, Judith? This is Pauline. I cannot come up and I wondered if you knew who was in town? Do you? Did Father Hunniwell tell you? Julian. Are you surprised? or did you know it?"

"How should I know it?"

"You did not, then?"

"Well — if that is all —" Judith's voice sounded final.

"Well —," said Pauline in her turn, "I thought in case you ran across each other you had better know before. He is to be here with Father Hunniwell for a time. It is exciting under any circumstances. I shall be imagining you falling into each other's arms on every distracted errand of mercy from now on! Your luck never deserts you, Judith. Your life is always a crisis. If you went and sat down in the desert of Sahara the sand would get up and dance round you!"

"Good-bye," said Judith sweetly.

"Why? I have got five minutes more." But already she had hung up the receiver.

She was grateful no one could see her face. It was lit, she felt sure, with a positive glory. Paula's news had gone over her like golden wine: Donatello's sunshine wine of youth.

To be in the same world with Julian had made

life supportable. To be in the same city with him seemed like an embrace. How strange that she had never foreseen the possibility. Yet what more natural than that he should wish to keep as near his spiritual adviser as could be made expedient?

From that moment she spurred herself on relentlessly, always pursued by a fear, a nameless nearness, weakening pulse and will. The loves of others unnerved her. She dared not go to Mass when Father Hunniwell celebrated, lest Julian confront her. The mere repetition of his name compassed her with a spirit-terror. Sometimes she wanted to scream aloud her love for one whom it was now a deadly sin to desire. And above all else in the night that surrounded her, she heard her own heart. Above the troubled voices always calling her, or her own sustaining words, the girls who clung to her, above the newspaper praise of her, or the measured tones of the Judge's sentence when some poor lamb went wrong, her wordless prayer had been unceasingly, "Now God be wings to one who flees!" And still this un-doing presence was beside her as her own shadow, this love she had always feared and which made life alive, even though she never saw its object.

After Father Hunniwell came to the Cathedral it had been a double spasm of hope and fear for her. It meant hearing of Julian sometimes. Now, with Julian near him, life was quick with the possibility

of meeting. Already they had communion of interest, the same sun and rain. It was enough. It was more than she had dared to imagine. Every day now was capable of resurrection from the dead before night. She could even visualise him now.

She knew the very walls he looked out upon from Father Hunniwell's own windows. She walked the streets he walked, knew the hours when he was before the altar. Life had become a wild adventure.

Under a fictitious name he was writing a series of articles called, "The Priest in America." She detected them instantly, from his phrasing as well as his citation, with its kinship to their mutual literary traditions. Loisy, and Sabatier, Tyrrell, and a host more they had discussed, Reverdy and he, before her.

Side by side, yet always apart, without one glance to keep alive the fire hid within, they worked for humanity. On the first anniversary of Reverdy's death Julian had sent her a prayer book in which he had written those words spoken of Cardinal Newman and Cardinal Manning.

Each gave his heart to the Purifier, his will to the Will that governs the universe.

What a vision for their own lives if they could only do this! Could they? Why could they not?

Pauline scarcely saw her sister now. She was very attractive, very much a woman of the world,

much sought and fully aware of her own value. Her son was becoming a graceful addition to her picture; one of the golden-haired velvet-mannered children with adoring little gallantries for his pretty mother, promising a picturesque relation bound to increase her charm as years went on. Pauline thanked her stars that he was a son. Her experience with her sister made a daughter appear a disastrous thing. Ferdinand looked on approvingly. He was older than mere years made him out, read more, was less inclined to leave his own library even for his club, found much to absorb him in his boy's education, gave his wife a free hand as always with the same impersonal devotion. Reggy, strange to say, had found a place for himself in a mild form of diplomacy and was accordingly abroad most of the time. He was still unmarried and thanks to accidents playing into his hand, was making something of a name for himself. Judith, hearing of him from others was glad, feeling it was a little her work too. It gave her the keenest joy she had now that this was so. And though her friend, Orren Kerr, never wrote and she had not seen him for years, a man who knew him said that no one man in San Francisco had more influence or used it to better advantage. "If I turn out better than the knave of spades it will be all your fault," he had sent word to her. Even Drake was happy in being a father, and interesting himself to some extent

in socialism. Perhaps, doing what she could, though it had begun in a mistake and had such strange and isolated results, including breaking her own heart in the process, had not been so far wrong after all.

One afternoon, obeying a sudden impulse, she entered the dark cathedral between the hours of actual service, and sat lost in the place that was as the very inner heart of Julian. Perhaps they two were nearer for having God between them. Perhaps daily living together would be less perfect than this impersonal communion they shared. The holiness of beauty touched her with its calm. She let the altar flowers and wide-armed Crucifix find her Puritan senses and possess them. It was a holy exaltation allied with Reverdy, remote from all searing human passion that tore women, like frantic beasts. She wished she were a Catholic. Perhaps she might be. Reverdy had left the rigid form of his ancestor's faith and become an Anglican. It seemed here as if the lower feeling for Julian could never assail her again. To work for her chosen, while Julian sacrificed and prayed and Reverdy watched over them both, might that not come to be life in the highest expression? A sweetness stole over her and she was blest, being able at last to be free of resentment toward him, leaving her love purified and stronger than before.

At her own door a messenger was waiting for her.

It was a swift summons — a girl run over in the street who wanted her. Not until they were in the motor and on their way did she stop to question the boy who brought the appeal.

“She is most gone — she had lost her senses when mother sent me for you, but she keeps right on saying your name.”

“Is it far? How long have you waited for me?” she asked.

He pointed listlessly, adding, “It’s awful hard on mother. She was the oldest of nine and just got where she could help some.”

“You have no father?”

He shook his head. “Mother don’t know you, but the Priest said you would come. He had to go away after he give her the last rites, but she don’t know anything. He said he was coming back. It was him sent me for you.”

“Father Lafferty?”

“No, she wanted Father Hunniwell.”

As she entered the poor little apartment on the top floor her eyes encountered what she had dreaded — Julian. Before him stood the mother of the injured girl.

“Oh, were you both at four o’clock Mass this morning?” she heard him say. The glance they exchanged was poignantly sweet, a mutual joy in the sacrament received together as beyond all conception of those outside. Judith shivered. Julian

and this poor woman were, beyond distinction of class or culture, one in their faith. An unholy jealousy sickened her.

Julian would go to Heaven and be saved, and she, Judith, would be lost here and forever, because she loved him best, beyond any creed, law or standard, moral or spiritual. He was happy, blessed. This yoke was easier to him than the one she had been ready to take upon herself at his bidding. She would have withdrawn at once except that already the woman had noticed her entrance.

Julian came forward meeting her coldly but with excessive gentleness. "We are friends of childhood," he explained to the woman, who seemed dazed by Judith's beauty and bearing. She went into the room where her daughter lay, to prepare her, and for a few moments they were alone.

An elevated train passing, shook the building and distracted her effort for control. As it grew quieter, he turned to her almost affectionately. "I hear of your goodness, not only from Father Hunniwell, but on all sides," he told her. "I am often sent on errands for Father Hunniwell, as I was today sent to enquire if he was needed again. I have often wondered that we did not meet."

"And I hear of your growing future and read your unsigned writing," she returned impersonally.

"Will you come some time when Father Hunni-

well celebrates Mass, Judith?" His manner took it for granted.

"Never. I should die," she protested, honestly convinced of what she said.

"It is infinitely consoling, why should you refuse yourself its satisfaction?"

"I should feel like those frantic painted creatures in the last judgment, clinging to the feet of the saved."

"That sounds as if you were not at peace with God."

Oh, how could he help seeing that loving him was preventing her from loving God more than him? How could he help knowing that he was saving his soul at the cost of hers?

Aloud she said quietly, "God is not solely in churches."

He glanced toward the inner room where a feeble voice repeated, "Mrs. Heminway?"

"She was too shattered mentally to make a coherent confession to Father Hunniwell," Julian said in a lowered voice. "He feared it might not have been solely an accident. She may need him after she has seen you. He trusts you to tell him all she says, that she may have the necessary intercession made for her soul's ultimate salvation."

Julian had come then, knowing he was to meet her. The advantage was his, as usual. Intercession after the girl was dead seemed to her like di-

voiced after Drake had lived with another woman, but she kept her thoughts to herself, and Julian added, "Father Hunniwell has his appointed place and hours for talking with any whose hearts are troubled. I wish you would go to him some time." It was the future Priest who spoke.

"She wants you to come right in, Mrs. Heminway," said the woman, beckoning from the doorway. Judith passed in without more than an involuntary inclination of her head in farewell.

She might turn Catholic by her own unhindered impulse, but Julian should never take her over by the definite methods of proselyting he would employ with less obstinate mettle.

CHAPTER XX

UP-STREAM

IT was a nasty afternoon, sleety and chill. She had sent away her own car and remained until dusk to give whatever comfort she could to the stricken mother. Her usual courage had failed her as she met the shrewd air that crept through her like an evil fear. She walked smartly toward the Avenue, hoping to find a prowling cab or a place from which she could telephone for one. Soon a friendly pharmacy came in sight, but as she was closing her umbrella to go in, a motor slowed up directly behind her and a familiar voice cried, "Let me take you up, Mrs. Heminway."

Peter Ormsby, very befurred, was at her side in an instant. The door of his limousine standing open invitingly, seemed to emphasise what she might have had and would not.

"This is no quarter for you to be in alone after dark," he reproved, much as Pauline might. "What on earth are you doing here by yourself on foot?"

She explained briefly and then, because she was shaken by the afternoon's experience perhaps, she

allowed him to put her in the car. It was warm, and a sense of being taken care of brought Drake forcibly to her recollection.

"If you are not tired, the park is pretty in this sleet, why not drive through? It is only a little longer and I want to report on your plan for financing the houses you asked me about," he suggested.

Judith acquiesced. The motion was delightful and she dreaded to go home and think. This would put it off a little. It was kind in him. He probably noticed that she was not in her usual form and wanted to help.

She still heard the words of the girl, Ida, "You were dead right, Mrs. Heminway; tell the girls I said so. If we get crazy about a man, we are all in. You are up against it yourself. There's a bunch that hate you." Then a struggle with weakness, then more faintly, "Don't tell I—I did it myself. He'd feel he was up for murder. He did not know—mean harm—just like all the rest." Again incoherence, and when Judith thought her gone, a rally and, "Tell Father Hunniwell—He'll pray me out. He is the best ever."

It was Peter Ormsby speaking, not Ida. She heard him vaguely at first. "So you see, it is not going to be the right arrangement. It will lay you open to all sorts of insinuation. Of course I do not believe one word of it and no decent man will. I would hold my right hand up in the face of hell

and swear that you were right! But you cannot go on so. No woman can. Everybody says so."

"What does everybody say? What are you talking about?" she asked, puzzled.

"About your continuing to run your work out of the pockets of men who only give because you ask them, and who have no sympathy with what you are trying to do."

The long lines of converging lights were arabesquing the whiteness that blurred them into the deepening dusk; as they crossed the Carousal it was like a fairy carnival. Judith had always loved the effect just at that point, but to-night she was blind to all but his meaning.

"Are you accusing me of sentimental blackmail? And to whom do you allude especially?" she asked gently, but not without indignation.

"No one and every one, even myself. No man in a city like ours has the least faith in any lasting change being brought about by sentimental methods. And every man knows that it is improper for a lady to expose herself to a lot of chances such as you take all the time. You are getting a positive hatred from a certain crowd; not a pleasant collection to deal with either."

"Is that a reason for resigning my girl friends to them?"

"That is not what I am talking about. In urging women against men you have been just suc-

cessful enough to make yourself ugly enemies. At first you were not of sufficient consideration to count, and then too, you were protected by your husband. Even there a man's name was the paradox that got you what little you won, and saved you from attack. Now, women will be worse adversaries than men. You are so ignorant, you fail to realise where you are going. No priest would dare encourage women to oppose sex instinct as you have. It is whispered that Father Hunniwell is catching your spirit and sharing your aims as far as he can and keep to his Catholic rule. If it became exaggerated aloud it would breed trouble for him, slight as his chance to co-operate with you may be."

"You are only proving what I am delighted to know; that I am hurting a vicious business by my interference."

"It is not safe and it has got to stop. There is only one way —" he paused.

An electric-lit motor flew by them; its occupants a man and woman with a lovely child between them.

He glanced at her face for softening or envy, but she had not seen what he saw. Then he gave her his alternative, went at it in his old monotonous way, reiterating his devotion to her, his willingness to save her from some abyss which he professed to see already yawning at her feet, tempting her with his fortune that was hers for a word.

If he opened her eyes cruelly, he showed her in the same breath what she need only do to recover all she had lost. The loss of prestige she felt in relation to many of the girls, the difficulty of forthcoming funds, the shrinkage in her sphere of influence; not one item escaped him, any more than if he had been listing a bankrupt factory he was about to take over and reinstate. She forgave him what he proposed, because he made it so plainly a matter of business. It was not until he summed it up by saying, "I am like Russia, I can wait, as you have seen. In the end I shall be the only way you can carry your point. You have got to do it through a man. You are not the kind of woman for this job, anyway. Here I am. Take me and use my name and my money as you will."

Then he seemed to expect her to answer. It had come to this then, a toss-up between failure in her work, or sacrifice of all she held her own. The heroic thing would be to take the chance. To give her body to be burned that others might be saved. In confusion she thought of Drake, of Julian, of disconnected matters having no bearing or value.

"It has been a trying afternoon. I find I am too tired to think," she said wearily. "Please take me home now, as fast as possible. I am not equal to understanding it all, now."

Peter Ormsby gave the order, and fussed over her solicitously all the way. At the door he left

her, saying that she would please send for him when she was rested. She tried to thank him, but went suddenly faint. The servant mentioned that Judge Cassidy was waiting, but left the sentence unfinished and ran for a glass of wine. Judith was all right in a few minutes; much annoyed by her loss of nerve. She went up to the library where Judge Cassidy was waiting for her, determined not to be foolish, whatever might be going to come up.

"So good of you," he said, rising, "I am sorry to trouble you when you are tired." His finely modulated, clean-cut diction steadied her. Here was a rock on which to depend.

"I thought it might be important, so I did not wait even to take my hat off."

"It is. I was too hurried to wait for your consent to my calling. I telephoned but did not get you, so came up to wait until your return. It is pretty late for you to be out alone without your own car." He seemed to know her errand.

"What is it? One of the girls?" she asked.

"No. I wish it were. A man, who hates you for charming his victim away from him is setting a woman on, by money, to destroy your influence."

"But I have been through all this before." She was so tired, nothing else mattered.

"But this time you cannot clear yourself technically. A friend came to me this afternoon, full of anxiety for you. I have made this breach in

professional code to warn you. There is time yet to avoid all unpleasantness. I implore you to be guided by your friends."

If he expected an outcry he was happily disappointed.

"You have gained in poise," he remarked admiringly.

"It is not that. I was prepared," she said slowly. "This is my third warning to-day. One of my girls died this afternoon. I have no idea how she knew what she said to me. She would not confess all to the priest who went to her. She was run over in the street. They sent for me." The tears fell as she ceased speaking, wrung from her in spite of her effort to hold them back.

Judge Cassidy's delicate hand clenched involuntarily. "It is more important even than I supposed, then—"

"What do you want me to do?"

"One of two things, either of which you will refuse."

"The first?"

"Go away at once, under any pretext you choose."

"Run away? Not at all!"

"I know the law and its possibilities of miscarriage better than you do. And I say go."

"Now you are trying to frighten me."

"I may be a little, but the truth is there is an

intrigue closing round you that will involve too many other names to escape wide publicity."

"What have I done to harm any one?"

"Spare yourself the detail of their low inventions."

"I am not afraid." She smiled up at him invulnerable and the old Judith again.

"You are not living with your husband, though not divorced, remember, Mrs. Heminway. He is living with another woman. You were seen and noted at a certain rather too well-known road-house alone with Mr. Pennell, by a man who has reason to hate you. You received a man at your brother's house in the country, on terms of intimacy, during your residence there alone after his death. You are known to have met this same friend at the house of his relatives in England, after the separation of your husband and yourself in Paris, although he was a candidate for priesthood. You have been seen frequently at the Bradishes' in the absence of your sister, while her husband was living there alone. It is known that you met Mr. Pennell there, on an afternoon whose date is remembered, and were there with him for two hours or more in an empty house. They will prove every point and they will also swear—"

Judith could keep silence no longer. "If that is all it is!" she cried, "Why that is all true. There is nothing in any of that!"

"Dear Mrs. Heminway, spare yourself all superfluous explanations to me. I reverence you beyond all living women. That is why I am here, because I am unwilling that you should expose yourself to forces you underestimate."

"What is the very worst they can do?"

"Drag you into court as a witness, pretending to need your evidence on another line, and then discredit your testimony; headline you and publish your picture. They will drag you in the dirt before they are through and because you are clean it will leave you blacker than ordinary people."

"I am not afraid to testify. I did all those things. It is the truth. They cannot harm me."

"You will help no one by so doing, only assist at smirching reputations as yet unsoiled. You have, in your power, people dearer than yourself."

She shut her lips hard. At last she turned full upon him. Did he mean Ferdinand. Of course. She saw it all now.

"Why should men be spared the consequences of their evildoing?"

He deliberated a moment before he asked in return, "Why should those who are innocent not be spared? Your friend and Father's Hunniwell's pupil, this Mr. Craigie, you surely do not include in such a charge?"

Judith felt suddenly cold. "Forgive me, Judge

Cassidy, for opposing you, but it all sounds hysterical to me. Is this the vaunted majesty of the law?"

"About as much as that you are a criminal in its eyes."

Still she hesitated.

"Have you forgotten already what it means that the girl, Ida, would not confess to any one but Father Hunniwell this afternoon? Does her loyalty to you in her dying hour make no suggestion to your discretion? Why did she refuse, unless to preserve your name from guilty scandals spread by those who want to harm you, and those employed in sacred offices with whom you are associated in their minds? I beg you to trust me without further words."

Bit by bit it came to her. "What do you wish me to do?" she said gravely.

"Go away, up to your blessed country, out of reach of all such vile creatures. Go at once, to-morrow, before they subpoena you and can bring you back."

The ringing of the hall-door bell resounded through their silence. Judith did not recognise the name upon the card brought up to her.

"Who is Mr. Robert S. Lawton?" she inquired idly.

"Say that Mrs. Heminway is engaged. Ask the gentleman to please call to-morrow at about this

same hour," Judge Cassidy directed. "I am just in time, it seems. He is a reporter."

"Why do you object to my seeing him?"

"You do not realise what it would involve."

"Perhaps I do. I am going to fight it out, you know, to the last ditch!" It was the cock-sureness Pauline dreaded, showing itself now.

"What would you say when confronted with innocent dates and names, made to serve the most vicious scandals, in open court?"

"I would say with Guinevere —

"Gentlemen, I speak truth in saying that you lie."

Judge Cassidy's spirit leapt to her challenge. He calmed his eager impulse, to say coldly, "Contempt of court and a fine."

"I was threatened with that by a big blue policeman, when I was eleven. It did not happen. The reporter would play fair, and I would give him the true version and trust to his decency."

"Too late," he replied. "One of these very girls you helped, the one you wanted me to reinstate, put misleading facts in the hands of the man who bought her. You interfere with his business. If it was your own affair, you might refuse to go. Think of men like Father Hunniwell, with whom you have worked constantly, imagine how impious suggestion without a shadow of truth can be made to involve any inconvenient person."

"The invulnerable need not fear. I have lived up to my own faith."

"But not the external code of such people as seek to condemn you now. My dear child, do not argue with me. This is an evil city made up of all sorts of warring factions. We who are on the side of right, do what we can. It is something. That is all. It eases our own ache for humanity a little. The fear of future punishment is almost wiped out, and you cannot make a city safe without hell."

To his surprise, she smiled up at him—"My Puritan great-grandmother is quoted as saying she could not keep house without the personal devil," she told him.

"Exactly!" he agreed. "It is the same theory; when penalty relaxes, vice is bolder."

"The Catholic hopes in hell, still," she encouraged him.

"Yes, but religion has small chance with the second generation of immigrants in America. The Catholic Church holds the Italians longest, but the Jew forsakes the synagogue and the rest follow suit. Money is soon God in this new world. When I recently rebuked a rich young Jew for his dissolute living, he exculpated himself by saying that he had only ruined Christian girls, never a Jewish maiden."

"And still there is such devoted service and

saintly character outside the churches—" she sighed.

"And so much confirmed criminality within," he inserted. Each followed the train of thought started, in silence, until he asked casually, "You do not believe in divorce, Mrs. Heminway?"

"No, not for myself, at least."

"Would it be an intrusion to ask why?"

"For myself I believe my superior advantages ought to make me an example of fixed principle to girls less fortunate. That is my idea in the abstract, and actually what does a form of divorce accomplish? It only covers a mistake or gilds a sin already committed, as the case may be. It is only a pretence. Is it not?"

"In the abstract I may have thought so, too, but if I were not too old I should offer you the protection of my name after taking the proper steps. You remember article twenty-three of the Napoleonic Code, which the French Feministes are fighting? 'A man must protect and a woman obey.' But much as I want to protect you, I want even more to have you love to the full possibility of your nature. I believe you will, yet. It is that intuition which makes me feel protection entirely inadequate to offer you. It is because of this that I ask you to go. No one has watched over you with deeper respect or cared more to help you than I. But sometimes the only way to win is to be will-

ing to appear to lose. You are not fitted for this life even after these temporary conditions relax, as they will in your case. If I could have hoped to win your love it would have given me the youth to do it. I care too truly for you not to save you for what will yet be yours. Trust life, always!"

His smile as he took her hand in his was sweet and wintry as ever, but his blue eyes were keen with pain and indignation.

He left her in another world.

She telephoned that night to Father Hunniwell. In response to her message, he came himself to receive the money for the masses to be said that Ida's soul might not pay its penalty in purgatory. He did not enquire further into either the reserved confession or its effect upon her own plans.

Early next morning, Judith, "the apostle of sweetness and light to the masses," as Pauline once called her in derision, the proud, unselfish child, Reggy Pennell's idol, Orren Kerr's one exception to womankind, Judge Cassidy's revered friend, the unceasing prayer of Julian, Reverdy's little sister, the only good angel of many despairing lives, went alone from her own door, stood looking deliberately about her, then walked away.

The first sunbeams and the noisy sparrows, those gamins of the air, were the only signs of life, except for a few scavengers further up the street.

All the bitterness of injustice was hers under the

cruelty of such misconception. Paula had been right. Her worst fault had been her cock-sureness. She was no better than the rest, so why had she set herself up to right the world? Then why could not she, like all the rest, have kissed and married and made believe and let the world wag on? What was a woman's heart against the armies of vicious desires banded in opposition? She had not sought her own happiness, but she had been blind. Yes, and Fate had doubled on her. She could not escape the brutal law of life any more than the weakest of her sisters, the fallen Isabella or the self-slain Ida. Until men change, women never can. Her sister Pauline represented the vanity of light-love playing at emotion. Martin's victim was innocence betrayed by instinct. The girl in court was born vicious, knew no form of passion but lust. Drake was animal appetite, Reverdy stood for love that was religion, in Julian it was the ruling passion converted. Yet nobody condemned Drake. He did as he liked and went unscathed. Reggy and Pauline were respected members of the very best society, because they played by rule. Julian was not only saved, but in the way of being saintly, though he had wanted her when she was another man's wife, and given her the fatal kiss that made all other men blasphemy to her forever. It was a problem too involved for her solving. She had meant shiningly and failed dimly. The forces

were too unequal. Evil against good was a fiercer struggle than rich against poor. One could not organise, or form protective unions against love as the labour interests did. It was a rebel toward all established systems and social order, that boarded the morning train at last.

It was just as the train started that a man rushed through the coach, with an official-looking, long envelope in his hand.

"Mrs. Heminway!" he called, "Mrs. Heminway?" "Special for Mrs. Heminway." She let him page the coach in vain. The train started. Her subpoena could not reach her now. So Judge Cassidy was right. Some one knew she was going, in spite of her precautions. It occurred to her that she had gone none too soon if she was to save—others. What other motive was there left? For Julian she was doing what she never for one moment would have considered doing for herself, had he been safely out of it. Peter Ormsby was entirely forgotten. There is no temptation in money to those who have known love.

CHAPTER XXI

HIS ALASKA BASKET

IT was not until late in the following October that Orren Kerr drew his chair to the rail of the piazza, which fronted the second story of the hotel on the village street, and lit a cigar; for the first time in a fortnight consciously free from a continuous sense of hurry.

The late autumnal winds sent the last yellow leaves scurrying away from the open square, obscuring the distance from time to time. He felt it all, rather than saw it. Or, to more exactly define his impression, he remembered rather than perceived each familiar aspect of Reverdy's village and its soft background of rising hills. In spite of the innovations of modernity which at first depressed him with their insistence on the inevitable changes during his absence, it was delightfully the same. He leaned back in his chair and rested in his subjective contemplation of existing circumstances. Here he was, Orren Kerr, back in the scenes of his boyhood's fanatical idealisation. Away off in California, his wife and children were happily speaking of him, where the surf was pound-

ing up on the sunset coast. And further away than a continent's breadth, a chain of mountains or two, countless wide rivers, and thousands of miles, he sat on this piazza of a New England town,— journeyed far into the chartless country of the Past.

As he continued to smoke, the haze of his recollections deepened and individualised. Some of the faces he invoked he should never see again. They would forever meet him only in dreams, since they had sunk from sight with marble smiles upon their lips,— transfixed as if listening — for his faithful returning footsteps, perhaps. He rose and began to pace swiftly up and down the long balcony. It had not occurred to him how void the place would be with Reverdy dead. He had supposed he knew Reverdy was dead before he came, but having come, it was as if he had accepted it in California, but never believed it true of this little town, where their friendship had struck and held with a reserve at once so charming and so enduring.

“ Fool to come,” he grumbled to his pipe, which he had substituted for the cigar in a sudden need of companionship. “ Fool ever to go back, anywhere.”

He was just deciding to leave by an evening train, when the village clock struck five. It seemed to evoke yet another echo.

“ Five,” he repeated, half ashamed of his association with the past, “ If she is in town she will

come now. I am going to will her to do just as she used."

Of whom should he think in this environment, if not of the girl who had dominated him and it? Though he had never, until given the distance of time and the wisdom of years, confessed her power over him as it now asserted itself, as something he must always have felt and respected, perhaps feared. He knew she was married, he was not informed where she might be now, abroad in some old world paradise, or were the flaunting glories of autumn delighting her up at the Rectory?

"If she is here, she will come," he repeated. "She was a creature of habit, like all romancers. She always came up the street at five to meet Reverdy on his way from his parish calls, and walk back with him. If she is here she will come. I will wait."

His eyes were intent now on the distant street.

"She will have to come, straight up the right side as she always did, walking on the grass, as she always did, then she will turn sharp off, cross and go toward the hills, always on the grass." He drew out his watch. "Five minutes past — no, too early, give her time from the Rectory down. She was always flying, a little late. She will come if she is here."

A blatant motor party, disgorging directly beneath, distracted his attention a few seconds, when

he resumed his vigil, up the street, under the Elms, came a woman in black, walking toward him; she crossed the street at a slant and disappeared. Was that Judith? He watched her, hardly breathing.

How long he stood there, he never knew. At twilight he walked up to Reverdy's grave. It was sweet with mignonette. So that was Judith. She was here.

It was close, the day following, with a muggy grey pressure of certain days in autumn, inland. The greyness held no refreshing echo of a fog bell striding the distant waves, no hint of endless, salty distance. It was densely, stickily sultry. There were cobwebs on the grass and strung languidly across doors and windows over night. Judith closed the piano. There was no music in the keys, no resonance to be got out of the dead atmosphere. She had tried to write a long message to one of her girls, but imagination had broken down. She could invent no plausible sequence for another's life or her own. Women hug the past. How easily men dismiss their tragic moments, by contrast! The mail came in and she turned it over indifferently. There would be none from Julian. Her heart would have turned hot and heavy, then light and cold, and that sensation of falling from a height,—then the wonder— Why should he not give her one cry of colour out of their deepening shade?

It was in this reaction that Orren found her, next morning. They sat on the Rectory porch and talked, always of the yesterdays. He staring, wistfully, at her.

He declined her invitation to dinner that night, but came, as she knew he would. Then they resumed worldly personalities, talking in general terms of marriage, divorce, life, love, folly, regret, men and women, anything serving as a medium for expression without confession. Anything veiling each from each yet always really of themselves. She felt the vigour of his life, felt herself warming her hands at the fires of life again as he talked. The breadth of his experience, his manly philosophy of events was stimulating. Orren was fine, able, keen, she noted all the incisive mastery of the man, but Julian was so entirely different,—so the one man in the world to her!

Oddly enough she seemed to him more remote than during their chat of the morning, more Drake Heminway's wife. He did not ask why she was here alone. His silence bristled with interrogation, however. She the desirable, the incomparable, sidetracked in a country town.

In the morning her great black hat had given her ambush; to-night they sat in the garden, watching the fireflies flash among the late array of vivid flowers.

He was as much in the dark as ever, but miserably confident the sleepless night coming would afford him ample opportunity to think about it. He had not listened to gossip about her. No one else should enlighten him as to her present standing if she did not choose to do so. And, on her part, she wondered how much he knew, or would care to learn. It was warm, in spite of the calendar. The air was choked with falling leaves and hazy with smoke from forest fires in the vicinity. She wore a thin black gown, which had the simplicity of sophistication. From time to time he looked at her, as if he grudged her the admiration she wrung from him. She looked very frail. He believed she had been ill,—and when her eyes kindled as they used to at intervals, he believed in the valour of the fight she had put up, might even still be putting up for her life. No, she was not morbid, she was exquisite.

He told her of his experiment at hypnotising her in the afternoon, hoping it would amuse her; repeated his story of her appearance just as it used to be made daily, and his own part in it. A bewildered expression crossed her face. "I did go out yesterday at five,—the odd thing about it is that I have not walked in that direction, at that hour, in years. I was not sent for either. I just went."

"Yes you were, too," he contradicted flatly. "I made you come. I knew you would have to, if you were here. I hope you do not mind?"

"It is rather nice to be thought of," she admitted.

He gave her a keen glance, then his tongue slipped and he exclaimed impulsively, "I was thinking as I came along up to-night, Judith, that you are my Alaska basket."

Her eyes were lifted questioningly.

"What is an Alaska basket? If it is slang, I shall not know, I hear so little of the world's cut phrasing up here."

A fold of her skirt touched his knee as she turned toward him. He felt as a violin might when the bow crossed the strings. She was curiously magnetic. He had always considered her the embodiment of life.

"It is no slang. It is a fable," he returned. "When I went to Alaska I made a collection of the rarest and most beautiful baskets, for which the country is famous. The very first day I landed I saw one I counted a gem. Its colour and form made me eager to buy it, but no, I reasoned this is only wonderful to me because it is the first I have seen. In all Alaska I shall see thousands more rare and beautiful for my collection; it is foolish to buy the first. And so I went away,—and I never saw another to compare with the first. It was the same

thing with you. As a boy I thought there will be a thousand girls in the world as wonderful as she,— or more wonderful even,— but I never found another.”

They sat watching the shadows fill with the regret of twilight.

“It was the same with Reverdy,” he said, afraid he had annoyed or shocked her. “I have never found another man like him. He had the stern character of the North with the charm of the Southern gentleman. It is strange to find you here; but you are getting strong?” he entreated.

“Stronger,” she assured him. “It is a good deal like being a nun, but I am getting used to it.”

“There is no fun being a nun unless some man sees you do it!” he retorted.

He called her some of everything, just then in his heart.

“What are you doing up here alone? Where’s Drake? Are you still in love with each other?” he demanded abruptly.

“Orren, please don’t question me.”

“But what does it mean your being here?”

“There is something in me that holds me here. I am not responsible for it. You were one of Reverdy’s best friends so I will try to tell you, if you will not interrupt.”

She did try to tell him of the time since she had left her home in town more than a year before; how

at first she thought she must hold on to some one else, how her "alone-ness" terrified her, how she was at loss to know what to do with it or herself; and afterward how she gradually learned she must depend upon herself, upon her own force, to make a life worth having; realising that everybody's life belonged first to their own family,—only she herself had none. And now, out of all these weeks of facing it up there alone, had come the conviction that she was herself an entity, upon which others must lean, instead of her expecting them to hold her up.

"Damnable altruism!" he broke in.

She reproached him with her eyes. "There are more chances to help in this factory district than one can hope to satisfy," she said gratefully. "There are lonely people and frightened people and young people who are mystified and want to talk things over but are shy about it with others, and people who want to sit by my fire that never goes out and just warm their souls a bit. So if I must go without love, I can save others some costly mistakes, give to a few hearts the praise they need, perhaps a little inspiration. Oh, Orren, I have found myself! I see North and the fogs are lifting."

He wanted to blaspheme but something restrained him, and she admitted bravely, "Of course, there are worse days, but most of the time now life is a miracle to me still, and there are some great hours

that make it all worth while. One can love one's way through the bleakest pass!"

"If you are sure your proposition is right I will stop talking. But is it?" Orren demanded. "Are you living on hope or duty? Some women try it on one and some on the other. Don't be a fool! If I came back in three years and found you happy, you would look ten years younger than you do tonight. You have aged," he said suddenly, as if impelled from within and frightened at himself for saying it.

She smiled. "So have you," she said gently. "I am older. That does not trouble me. I have had no desire to remain young. I've had that too. I am having this now. It is all a part of life."

"You are a wonder!" he burst out.

"I have got past the fear of looking what I am, at least. The truth is pretty staunch to go by, Orren."

"Where will you ever find your mate?" he asked, with a half sneer. "In ten years of people, people the wide world over, I have never found your equal! No not one."

"You are too good to me, Orren. You always were good to me as a child."

"Oh, I am a star!" he asserted. "I have been waiting, hanging round the sky until joy and passion and youth called their ugly shadows on your heels, and in the dread of them you would want

Reverdy and not having him, somebody else, and not having him, me. I have passed that way before and know the turns in the road. It twists a lot as you go on; especially for a woman, like you," he added.

She was pained by his suggestion. He saw it.

"Go to Europe, Judy, go anywhere, only go!" he broke out. "Begin again, patch it up, what you will. Did I ever misunderstand you?" He was savage now. "You have had cursed hard luck with the men you have known," he jerked out. "What are you doing here, anyway? What is your plan?" he was at loss and angry with the situation.

"Trying to be faithful to myself. Reverdy loved the text 'faithful unto death.' It is cut on his stone."

"I would far rather see you unfaithful, unto life," he disputed. "If you have got to be a Saint, don't mortify the body like Julian Craigie, but sanctify it like Reverdy,—or if you are sorrel-top Orren Kerr, be not overcome of temperament but overcome temperament with food." He was ugly now. His eyes lost their kindness and flashed like a hungry animal's. He hated cant. Most of all he hated religion or morality that made Judith miss her joy of living.

She knew that he wanted her happiness at any hazard. Their point of view was not the same and she did not know how to convert him so that he

would see it at her own slant. "I still feel that passion gratified kills its object, and denial keeps it alive. I have chosen deliberately," she assured him, hoping he would say no more.

"It will catch you, even if you do watch out. You are no archangel to stand off all the laws of life."

"Perhaps it has caught me," she said softly.

"Just to be a woman, drawbacks and perquisites thrown in, is the loveliest game Paradise plays," he began persuasively.

"But not my kind; to be my kind means flaming swords as surely as angels at the gate," she objected.

"Now you listen to me, Judy. In the East if a chap makes a mistake, he is crushed,—I mean a woman too of course,—but out where I live toward the sunset almost everybody has begun over. You would be astonished to see how happy they are and how much they get out of life on a second try."

"Do you like living among such people?"

"There is a bunch I don't live among—most decidedly; a bunch that is not honest and that is the limit of social depravity. I won't meet them or let a woman I care for meet them. But you must never forget there is all the difference between an honest mistake and a persistent duplicity. I enjoy a great deal. Of course it is a makeshift,—even the scenery can't redeem that fact." He spoke of his home, facing the tawny beach line, backed by snow

capped peaks. "You would like it," he stated, turning to her with one of his convicting glances, as if expecting her to antagonise him.

"Any woman would. It sounds heavenly."

"They don't always," he contradicted, "women are bound to get the worst of it always and in marriage especially. It is a ghastly risk to run for any one, and worse for a woman. I have not told you about my own marriage."

"Orren! You married? The boy who used to avoid girls, jump out of windows, run away, climb a tree, anything to escape them?"

"It was all queer. I had been seeing her all winter at Palm Beach. She was engaged to another man. She found she could not do it, broke it off. I left her with no more idea of being engaged to her than committing hari-kari. When I heard it, I sat down and wrote her like this,—'I should like to marry you at Richmond the tenth. Do you agree? If so wire "Mouse-trap," if not wire "Bird-cage." She says I added a postscript—"don't forget what I have written."'"

It was the first time Judith had laughed like that for months.

"Oh, Orren Kerr, what happened next?"

"She wired "Mouse-trap" and I went on and married her; that's all."

"To live happy ever after?"

"I don't know about that," he spoke almost

roughly. "I married her on a five years' contract. I told her I would be true to her for that time anyway. Then we could renew or break by mutual consent."

"How did that strike her?"

"She agreed to it. I would not marry under any other conditions."

"What was your idea?"

"I am not going to live a lie," he said positively. "If I get over caring for her and care for some one else more, what decency is there in going on with it?"

"And she is willing?"

"I think as the time comes round she is nervous."

"I should think she would hate you," cried Judith. "It is not the same for her as for a man whether her life is demolished."

"Yes, but even a smash up would be better than deceit. I won't have my children brought up on a living lie,—as so many children are. No, that is the worst of it all. I have told my wife plainly,—if I am ever infatuated with another woman I promise to tell you so as soon as I know it myself,—and get out."

"Is she beautiful?"

"Yes, and everybody else will tell you very rich. She is that too, but that does not stop a man when he begins to go off his head about another woman."

Now mind you, I am not saying that I am or that I ever shall be, but I may. I only say if I do, I won't pretend I don't." His eyes had the brutal light she disliked in them.

"It is the craziest creed I ever encountered," she said, incredulously.

"She understands me."

"Oh, well, if she understands you —"

"She puts up with me, I ought to have said."

"And what do you do yourself, have you dropped your engineering?"

"I do nothing. I lost my health from hardships out in the desert alone. I am a failure."

"A failure with a wife and two children?"

"That has nothing to do with it. That's woman's work. I was speaking of achievement, for a man, at least."

Her face sobered till it was tragic. She knew that; had discovered it for herself. Seeing it he cut his own story short.

"Judy, I am all cut up about your seclusion here. You are not a dual personality like me, you have got the whole gamut at once. Your fun, passion, force are the whole octave without one beggarly interval missing. Most women are the simple chords. And yet you stay here and let yourself dry up for fear of a rotten lot of carpers. You, who could love more into life in an instant than any other woman in a generation!" He stopped at his

next impulse, he had almost said, "and yet Drake Heminway could forget you for a French trollope!"

His affection, his genuine misery over her touched her profoundly. Her eyes filled with weary tears. If he had seen them it would have been a bad thing for him, just then.

"I do not mind being alone as much as other people," she said, to say something.

"Alone,—no, there is nothing wrong about that, that is the desert, and the desert is what I like best; what I love best, I mean. You women have the worst of it all round. If your hearts are broken you can't go and lose yourselves out there, where the sand hits the sky and the stars prick through the pink." He drifted away from the personal then, telling her story after story, unique, original, thrilling; realism was his atmosphere, his tales were all of experiences of living men and women in a big, real, tempting, demanding world outside her gentle back-water that seemed to him stifling her as it penned her in with its narrow safety.

"How you profess divorce!" her voice was tense with disapproval.

"Of course I do, if you care to stop for it. You would, if you had seen as much of it as I have. Don't you believe in the highest call of your soul?"

"Not unless it is given in the low voice of duty," she said firmly.

"Duty has nothing to do with it," he said grimly.

"I cannot bear to hear you talk like that," she cried. "Don't blaspheme and don't experiment. Duty is the only safety for any of us. If we are obedient to that, everything will come right in the end though we do have to suffer. It will, it must!" Her voice pleaded for herself, not alone for him.

"Yes, I believe that too," he admitted. She had taken the one note to make him ring true and clear.

He scanned her face for the reason of her sudden softening. As he did so she read in his own the desperation of an impending crisis thwarted.

"What in God's name are you moping about, Judy? Go out and live life!"

"I have lived,—until it nearly killed me."

"Let it kill you! What are you saving yourself for, here?"

"Thank you, I know you speak and act for Reverdy's sake,—I have felt it all along, and I do appreciate it, but —"

"I have said nothing and done nothing for Reverdy's sake, only for your sake, why do you try to evade?" he asked defiantly.

"I must go," he stammered suddenly, coming to himself. "The desert is my temptation. If I am missing some day, you will be the one who knows what became of me. It drags me at times. Some day I won't try to resist it. You women are not afraid of suffering. We men have to pretend it does not ache so very hard now."

Judith knew well that men cannot admit suffering a legitimate place in their universe. She knew also it was like the colour of their eyes or any racial peculiarity, beyond discretion of the victim. She tried to reassure Orren, both by words and manner, but he remained dissatisfied with her.

His pallor frightened her. In spite of his iron will he was not physically strong, she saw it had all been too much for him.

She followed him with compunction, begging him to wait a little until he was equal to the walk. "You have gone too far to-day," she cried, referring to his twice having climbed the Rectory hill.

"Yes, I have gone too far," he agreed, with a momentary spasm of pain, "but you are only setting out,—you have not gone half far enough."

"Come up to-morrow to dinner if you are able," she said, ignoring his meaning.

"I am going away,—I have got to go some time, and it might as well be to-morrow. It has been a treat to me, being here."

He stayed on for several days but gave her no sign of himself until he appeared in the early dusk, hat in hand, not waiting to sit down. "I came in to say something to you; in justice to yourself before I left," he announced, without introduction. "You may have wondered where I've been since our last talk. Well, I have been busy about my own affairs. I went up to Reverdy's grave this

afternoon. I stayed there or I would have come here. I thought a good deal while I was there. I was not very happy. A man is not, when he thinks, as a rule. You are dead right. You have got to stay right here. When the Almighty sees you can do it, he will give you another stunt. He won't keep you at anything he sees you are perfect in. These bare unproductive hills make character. They certainly do. It is a bleak job, but as the Maine skippers say 'you will fetch.' Good-bye and good luck." He gripped her hand and went off down the path without glancing back.

If Drake and even Julian had not understood her, Orren had. It braced her to think of his approval like a sharp east wind. Men were great in friendship. Why did no woman ever find that enough?

His gloves lay on the table forgotten. She sent them to the hotel with a card on which she hastily wrote,

When infatuated remember duty.

P. S. "Don't forget what I have written."

The returning messenger laid them again upon the table. "Gone," was the curt reply.

"Was there no address?"

"Only 'gone to the desert,'—and the clerk thought that he said that in fun because no one would be likely to forward mail to him here."

CHAPTER XXII

SILENCED

THE first year of Julian's novitiate had been one of rapt consecration. He had left the devil no unemployed hands or brains wherewith to sport, nor need he bow at mention of the name, or ward off the evil One with crossed fingers as the Romans do. What he had renounced he had definitely renounced. If he thought of Judith, it was only by force of some momentary association, for which he crossed himself, making an act of contrition invariably afterward as for an intentional indulgence. He prayed for her soul, as for a sister's, in her fight against a world of sin, and for her ultimate conversion from heresy. After his devoted friend and spiritual adviser, Father Hunniwell, went to America, he found himself less triumphant in progress toward perfection and after some discouragement with himself, sought and obtained permission to continue his career under Father Hunniwell's supervision if not actually by his side. At first it had seemed to lift the burden of personal responsibility, and then the

inspiration of a life like that of the older priest, infused a deathless impulse for imitation in the soul of the hot hero-worshipper Julian had always been. He gave himself wholly to his studies and to such work as Father Hunniwell allowed him to perform among the poor of his charge. At first it had excited him to be in Judith's world again. Sometimes he heard her name from penitents she had started back to them, or the wayward it was their common task to reclaim. If they never met, surely they were near comrades in the blameless singleness of aim which united them by every invisible bond.

The modernism of his friends had not at this time touched Julian, when the church was still more his means to an end than the whole meaning of his being. He wanted to accept, even embrace dogma; to believe, to be saturated with the holy faith that should exclude worldly regret and wipe out recollection. Unreasoning, mystified, adoring he gave himself to religion as under other circumstances he would have given himself to art. This had been Father Hunniwell's spirit in his own earlier experience, but soon the learning widespread in America, the onward movement of religious thought and the easier attitude toward education had set him reading, then reasoning, then writing, till suddenly he realised that though safe himself in the inmost fold, the modernist and he were brothers in brain if not in outward profession. The question at bottom

was becoming to him too, as Loisy expressed it in his letter, "Not a matter of the Pope's infallibility, but whether the universe is inert, empty, deaf, without soul, without heart; if the conscience of man is without echo more real or more true than itself."

He had to confess that this question expressed his own inmost conviction. But like all the most profoundly reverent modernists, he wished to remain in the church. Seeing nothing to be gained for the welfare of his people by expression of his views, he continued to pray in his soul for the greater wisdom of his head, guarding every utterance, writing nothing that could confuse others, preaching, advising, where opportunity offered. And as Julian watched him closely for indications of spiritual unrest, he in turn observed Julian not only as a future priest but as a human man, sending him among all conditions of people, wherever there was an errand of mercy that could be properly entrusted to him, and giving him at all times the benefit of personal instruction and direction. Thus far Father Hunniwell watched approvingly, noting how Julian moved among the ignorant and humble as well as the learned or vicious, as a true gentleman of high conviction and tradition and a pure heart only could.

Intolerant sometimes, arrogant in his demands upon them based upon his faith in them and theirs in his own inerrancy, he might prove, but the serv-

ant of all,— as became the greatest among them, and with a patience almost if not quite divine. Half his power with those born beneath him lay in the secret of his patrician bearing. It stood him in stead of years, gave him a natural authority. Being an aristocrat he could well be the democrat of them all, without bitterness or envy, sure of their faith in him to lead, and their certainty of his knowing more and being more than themselves. Father Hunniwell knew that his comprehension of his fellow beings came to him, bred to the society of men and women, inherited from weak and worldly women as well as brilliant and true,— from men who had leisure for hunting and books, from clerics and statesmen, from his artist father, from blood and beauty, brawn and passion as well as self-control, sympathy, and strength. But was even asylum from Judith and the pain she had inflicted enough to reward or powerful enough to hold such a combination of inherited traits within the accepted dogmas of the Church?

Lose himself he might learn to do in Mass and ministration, in saints and sinners, but thwart the science, art, and education that had been his birth-right, that he had taken in with the very air of the old manor house at Beauchamp among his uncle's friends,— that was another problem, possibly fated to become vital.

As he went forward this morning, just before the

beginning of the Mass, his was still the face of aristocratic line rather than melodramatic beauty. It made no bid for popularity. His mouth was grim when it was not sweet. No one but a woman in love with him would know the eyes' peculiarity. Sappho might have foreseen him when she said —

“Stand face to face and unveil the treachery of your eyes!”

So different already were the lover and the priest. The impression he produced was of kinship with those “second things” upon which Pater gloats so lovingly; those subtler elements requiring higher tension, closer observance, the appreciation always focussed upon the unapparent beauty, the hidden charm. Never wasting value upon the evident with the banal; not losing their undertones in the noise of the mob. Following the acolytes Father Hunniwell was advancing from the sacristy.

“Introibo ad altare Dei.” The familiar words met instant response —

“Ad Deum qui laetificat juventum meum!”

As the officiating priest genuflected before kneeling, “Father Hunniwell,” went from mouth to mouth. He heard how they repeated it.

Strangers congratulated themselves. The parish exchanged significant glances of satisfaction. Even the altar boys looked piously intent, for Father Hunniwell had eyes in the back of his head, as each had at some unfortunate fast or feast discovered. There

were tedious penances for acolytes who slept or evinced levity during his sermons. They sat up now stiff and serious as a row of archbishops, their frail childish hands crossed unctuously, as the priest approved.

His eyes swept them first, then the nave of the church. He would scorn himself later for noticing how the faithful were crowding to be near him, how close they were standing even at the rear of the aisle where there were no seats. He signed himself mentally for the observation savouring of self and that satanic love of the world, which so easily beset him even now in the holy of holies. Was it that he, the servant of the Cross, might be glorified, that he had been sent into the world?

Of the five priests officiating to-day, three were older and above him, but none his equal in eloquence. When the incense had floated above the last Amen of the seraphic boy chorister, the hush of expectation fell. Sad and sombre faces, young and old, blooming and disconsolate, haunted and peaceful were lifted to him.

He had been something of an orator in his college days. His ancestry of fine taste gave him balance and brevity of construction, which his listeners did not analyse but which carried home. And when he threw off restraint they felt him and gave themselves to him unreservedly. He had preached to them on the joys of heaven until the tearful and

ecstatic throng had seen the world and its perishable joys slip away beneath wingéd feet. Who but he had pictured the torments of the damned so vividly that men had let the bottle alone in sheer terror, and innocent girls fainted.

And once, Pat Houlihan's wife said to him with beaming face, " Oi do likes to hear your Riverence! Judgment is a fine subject! I have lived me life so well I have no need to get scared as the others do, and it's fine to see 'em with their knees shakin' so they can't get to the altar! "

Who was there but Julian, to query how deep it all went with him? How much of the artist, the actor, there was left unexorcised in him?

To-day he was a patriot of patriots and stirred them with the glory and privilege of America. America and all America for catholicism! The Vatican eventually moved to Washington, the Vicegerent of Christ enthroned in their midst. Let hoary Italy destroy, let modernism gut France, America with her youth and irrepressible vigour will lift up the church to the very gates of Heaven!

He had forgotten himself, spoken as young Italy might speak to Rome. All the vigour and splendour of him was on his lips as he from the altar betrayed the Mother-church and her strict policies to the heresy of education. The upturned faces before him were Americans like himself. Many of them

had crossed the sea to find their future and rejoiced in it. The light through the rose-window kindled in a myriad flames, splashing here a grey head that shone under it transfigured, making angelic aureoles about a sleeping child, touching the high altar with one resplendent immortal beam above him.

His voice, always eager even in its reverence, rang out to them to-day in his exhortation to purity, nobility, and the safeguarding of love and home. Books, high thoughts, the things that are pure since only the pure in heart shall see God. Then as a reference to the great gifts of America, free education, free libraries, the great boon of general learning, the people's right!

He characterised as wilful those who sat in darkness. The night school, the colleges for men and women, the universities with their scholarships for the deserving poor were exalted; then back to the church and her vision of the one only true faith. But alas! too late. In conclusion his voice dropped as he said humbly —

“And, after all, each and every one is a stone in the eternal wall; *coelestis urbs Jerusalem.*”

He withdrew to the sacristy vibrant with his message. The religion had never seemed so authentic, so magical in its sustaining power and possibility.

America for catholicism was in his blood as on his lips. He felt the bigot in him. The fanatic, that which in another channel made of Julian a hot lover, now made him love the death of martyrs and voluptuous flames of sacrifice. A little unbalanced perhaps by his own emotion he unvested and knelt from sheer excess of ardent adoration. Julian, too, was exalted. To re-make or recover his brain and heart had been no simple task for him. To-day his difficulties seemed submerged in the Infinite Love. The boundless vision intoxicated him. Saints, angels, martyrs pressed upon his closed eyes. The nearness of their companionship seemed to promise him eternal right to their fellowship.

Father Hunniwell had scarcely risen from his knees, the rapt look still in his eyes, when a younger priest, entering hastily, bade him to the clergy house without delay.

He crossed the narrow yard between, still intent on his soul's vision. The door was opened for him from within. Evidently he was impatiently awaited. In the formal reception room at the right, reserved for intimate and grave occasions, sat his bishop, alone. Still in the daze of the sunshine he stood before his superior, realising himself a mental peer if not superior, as he did so, and yielding his crown to no man.

Was he so soon to be advanced again? It was probable,—

What passed between them there remains forever strictly under the seal. Till the golden books are open and dead arise, no man can say.

Blindly, dumb and confused, Father Hunniwell sought his own inner refuge, his own private oratory, when at last he was dismissed.

Within twenty-four hours, as had been expressly stipulated, the clergy house knew him no more. Retreat, silence, submission were his. Extinction alone rewarded the progressive American catholic who had dared to promulgate such hazardous doctrines in the new world, where the bright hope of the church lay in the ignorant teaching of priests, or nuns well-trained for the parochial schools in wise avoidance of the truth of to-day. A form of the economy fit successor of the bigotry that burned Savonarola and crucified Galileo in vain. For if truth exists, can swearing that it does not, prevail to prevent Columbus from finding a world?

“Like a lamb he was led to the shambles,” repeated itself in the victim’s mind. It was not blasphemy, it was consolation; the only form he was likely to get. The offence was heinous. He was a traitor, a lost soul unless he speedily made his peace with heaven. And Julian, pacing up and down the sacred jail where his friend was incarcerated for nominal retreat, was at first all for war, not penance or self-abasement. To Julian, self-respect, the noblest motives, the loftiest aspirations for one’s

fellowmen had been impugned and smirched by misunderstanding and deliberate preference for the darkness of the Middle Ages. Yet authority was final. This channel of the church would be forever closed to one who resisted. Yes, authority was final and unquestionable, and it was to Authority he bowed at last with Father Hunniwell; confessing himself led astray by the sin of heresy, the devilish desire to rule the world, the setting up of a kingdom of wisdom alien to that of the sacred Innocent, to the ambitious temptations of Anti-Christ; — yes Father Hunniwell admitted it all. It was with a contrite heart if not with a broken spirit he accepted the yoke again meekly, finding it heavier than before, and taking up the charge put upon him, an insignificant mission parish in a factory town in the country, as an exile from influence, an outcast as far as succession to any of the coveted places of advancement or power were concerned. His was a blighted career, a voice the more for reform and progress silenced. For to doubt or to disparage the all-sufficiency of the parochial school was the sure road to ruin for any priest, and this sin had been his.

He took up his cross voluntarily, knowing it fictitious to speak as if it was laid upon man, and that it was not Christ's unless voluntarily assumed. But also he knew, taught by another Father more advanced than he, that there is an ought of thinking

and feeling beside the ought of conduct. But all the under side of authority, all the bigotry and ignorance unconcealed by chaunting or incense leered at Julian now. Was implicit obedience to mediæval ignorance the best and only way? If so, why had God presented knowledge to Eve and let her suffer for it? Royal Eve! Free-will had entered the mortal drama with her. He applauded her, but she made him think of Judith, therefore was to be immediately exorcised as evil.

CHAPTER XXIII

“ THREE FIRM FRIENDS ”

OVER a line of amethyst hills hung a great white full-blown rose of a moon, seen through the gnarled branches of giant oaks against a sky of sea-green such as winter without snow gives to scatter and harden the cold beauty by its counter illumination. For though it was December the landscape was that of autumn still. The world below was already dark in shadow and only the sky seemed animated, even festal, by contrast. The peculiar clearness of the atmosphere gave a sense of exhilaration to Judith, as if she actually drank in the beauty by more senses than belonged to its customary delight. In contrast to it, below in the valley where the chain of factories lined the river, and further on beyond, at the little towns scattered every few miles and connected by the common interest of their great mills, scarlet fever was raging relentlessly.

Judith knocked at the door of a little house lying some distance from the rest, where she had been doing what she could for the child smitten with the

disease and trying to prevent the deadly contagion. She had left only a few hours before and was hurrying back to remain for the night. The door was now opened by a stranger priest, who made no movement to let her pass.

"I am Mrs. Heminway," she explained.

He shook his head unconvinced she thought. "I was here yesterday and all morning to-day," she continued,— still he did not stand aside.

"All admission to fever houses is refused, except to professional assistance," he said slowly as if repeating a lesson.

"But I am the same as a nurse, surely you will not refuse me?"

"Comprends pas."

"You are French?" she asked, regretting her stupid prejudice against his language now.

"Polish, Madame," he explained.

"But you must not refuse me," she insisted, "I am the friend of all these people. My brother was the rector on the hill for a long time. It gives me the right to help you."

"I regret to be obliged to refuse. I am not the source of authority here," he repeated. "I only have come to assist, also."

"No? But you are the assistant priest at the Four Corners, are you not?"

"Of the mission church, yes, Madame, but this is the affair of the Father at Fairfield, four miles be-

yond. He too is a stranger, recently come to his parish, but he is in charge of the sick."

"How can I find him?"

"It is true, he might make an exception for Madame, if she explained herself to his satisfaction," he admitted. They had been speaking in French.

"Where is this priest to be found?" she repeated. The Pole opened his hands wide as if to express a boundless possibility —

"As for that, he is just now everywhere, Madame. Of an energy and devotion marvellous to regard. If Madame wishes she can go to his house. He is living in a little place near his church. He is here but a few weeks, but every one loves him. He is a saint."

"Are there others working with you in the fever stricken districts?"

"Several, Madame, but all permissions for entrance to the houses of Catholics are referred to Father Hunniwell."

Father Hunniwell! Was it here that he was buried, then? Was this his reward? She thanked her informant and rode away.

Her horse had done some stiff work during the last few days and she did not spare him now. When after an unbroken trot, uphill and across the intervening meadows, she reached the house to which she had been directed, a man was just entering the door. It was too dark for recognition. She

assumed it to be Father Hunniwell, calling to him without stopping to dismount.

He turned and stepped back into the darkness. "May I detain you just one moment, Father Hunniwell?" she called, without even putting out her hand, lost in the urgency of her errand as well as the shock of his surroundings.

"I have come to get your consent to go among the sick people," she explained, trying to speak naturally at first, and then to suppress the faintness that threatened her as he came up to her, looked full in her face with the eyes that smote her like the naked sword; not Father Hunniwell or a stranger but Julian Craigie.

"Why Judith, how you startled me," he said simply.

"And you startled me."

"I am here to help my friend Father Hunniwell, but I supposed you were in the far-away city."

"No. I have failed there; but never mind that now, just let me help all I can here. Nothing will hurt me, if that is what you are afraid of, just because I do not care if it does. You know the unhappy are always immune."

Her heart clamoured, but she kept her hand on it.

"The contagion is so violent it hardly seems advisable for outsiders to go among the factory people now," he warned.

"I am not an outsider," she said quickly.

"It is reckless exposure and useless exposure too, in most cases."

"They are mine own people. I beg you not to refuse. I shall go to Reverdy's people anyway, Father Hunniwell can only prevent me from going to his, and I love them all."

"And the Poles?" he asked, wondering at her.

"And the Poles," she assured him. "I understand them. They are exiles. They still fear to be handled as they are in their own country during bubonic plague."

"They carry infection by concealment and spread disease," he objected; "only last night a family disappeared that we had put under our sanitary inspection. This morning there was not a trace of them. How they got away with all their belongings no one can conceive."

"Yes, but they are still haunted by scenes in their own land. They do not know our sort of care for them."

"What do you expect to do about it?"

"Help you right there. We can save others by stopping the panic if we can hold the Poles quiet and obedient." Then she could not restrain herself, she broke out. "You go among them, why should not I?"

"For me it is only a question of what our Lord would do in my place, and Father Hunniwell is do-

ing. For you it is a criminal risk," he insisted. But she would not have it so.

"If God wants me to live, He will take care of me," she said; then with one of those completely unreasonable turns of hers, "Must you continue to assist at the celebration of Mass? You are so terribly exposed in this little church with these poor creatures who are many of them in just the condition to spread the disease?"

"Why should I be more afraid than you, Judy?" He did not realise his use of her old nickname. "Do you remember the poem of Coleridge that Reverdy repeated to us so often?"

"'And three firm friends, more sure than day and night —
Himself, his Maker and the Angel Death.'"

His smile needed no word of reassurance.

"Amen. Come quickly, Lord Jesus," she murmured, "I have your consent?"

She turned from him in one of her rare moods of all-spirit. There was nothing else in earth or heaven, no one else and never would be!

She knew the external facts of all that had happened through Pauline, except the conclusion of Father Hunniwell's humiliation. She had associated both Father Hunniwell and Julian with the stately worship of the Cathedral and the formal dignity of the Clergy house, the pomp and circumstance

of purple power. Here all was bare and sordid. She had come upon them in a tawdry wooden building that sat upon one's imagination like an ugly dwarf. The gaudy red and yellow windows were varied with bright greens. The cheap vestments and imitation lace of the altar-cloth, all the theatrical bravado of triumphant catholicism in an outlying mission, far from that which had been theirs, including the temptations of the religious world, passed before her in fancy, while in her eyes the beloved features of Julian were already heightened by the ermine of Bishops and even the golden cope. In fancy she even heard the Pope's angel singing over him. Suppose this should happen to him? Yet in the perfect self effacement of his devotion to his friend, as well as submission to his faith, there had not been one expression in his eyes or hint upon his lips that it was not all exactly as she might have expected to find it. Was he simply very proud or the humblest of the humble? A handfull of Poles escaping final damnation by mechanical forms they did not even try to understand, immigrants possessed by the money madness and getting up in the world,— were these to be the life work of a man of Father Hunniwell's powers? This made her a rebel for them both. And Julian too was obliged to count the beads of the past, as he took the brief meal that was to reinforce him for a sleepless night of work.

He had suffered himself to be led back to the

American priesthood by Father Hunniwell's being there; but also indirectly, perhaps unconsciously, through her, and his interest in her theories of humanity. He had renounced all; definitely and forever. She had been doing her work superbly when they last met, but never a happy woman, he got from her by intuition that had never failed him since boyhood. Had no one made her forget him then?

He was interrupted before his first cup of tea was tasted by an appeal from the Hennissy family. "It's me boy, your Riverince, my poor boy. It's him as made me leave the drink! He's the life of me, entirely," Dan reiterated all the way back to the bedside he had left only to seek the help that would not fail.

"The life of him,"—yet how was one to reconcile that with dead unto sin? Surely the family was not sin, suffering Dan Hennissy had found that out. And if not for Dan, why for any other man,—why for him? The arbitrary ought of conduct and feeling draw him back sternly from such adventurous surmise.

He was convinced that the significance of sin was less in injury inflicted upon oneself or society than in its absolute evil as defiance to the Spirit, hostility to God. The least wavering in that supreme allegiance was disaster in a soul fully consecrated.

Through the dreary days and awful nights that followed, they two moved forward, grimly yet with

a conscious elation under Father Hunniwell's lead. Judith's golden hair gleamed out upon him from countless dark corners. Always it was the shining glory of it that he was sure to catch first on entering any dismal chamber whence hope had fled.

"Sure she's after puttin' a man in moind of the Holy Virgin, with her gold crown, she is," Dan Hennissy burst out, and was amazed by his instant reply—"No, only a human woman!"

Our Lady was less to him than this, just now, perhaps; for though these frantic mothers prayed to her and burned candles ceaselessly, it was for Judith that they clamoured. Her presence seemed to restore order wherever she went. What sort of a religion was it that made it deadly sin for him to adore and worship a woman like this? He asked himself too often for denial. Why should it be fit for all condemnation for even him to love and cherish and worship her, and long to create with her beings in God's image and their own, to His infinite glory and service?

Celibacy assumed dubious holiness in that dark hour of common struggle. He saw her brave contagion at every turn, dauntless, cheering, inspiring. He saw her charm the suffering away from children with a look in her eyes that made his own dwelling place Golgotha. Her hands clasped themselves round these little bodies as if she would never let them go. He saw her wrists curved softly to their

hot relaxation, her utter gentleness reinforcing her strength that never seemed to ebb. Her resourcefulness was inexhaustible. She had summoned several of her girls to aid her. They had gladly come. Tireless, even radiant, she gave out energy at every pore. Could he help suspecting the source of her secret? Did he not know it was the association with him in his work? Saint Anthony's temptation was but a brazen fiction beside Julian's now. Just to watch her with the children of the poor refuted every argument and relaxed every vow. What was a religion worth that failed to recognise the life that gave itself wholly in love to others' need?

Why should her Creator have made her if she was to be wasted by the thwarting of His own design for her? Yet he, Julian, had denied her all for which she was fashioned from the beginning. He had stolen her divine woman's birthright from her, by refusing her what he only of all the world could give her. And this for the sake of a mediæval tradition, if not superstition. Suddenly the sculptor in him lifted its head. He wanted to model her hands.

He knew what Nietzsche meant now, by saying—"Unless you have chaos within, you cannot give birth to a dancing star." His had risen above the inner horizon of chaos. He had decided it should dance.

When the fight was won, and life ruled over death, at last, he resolutely left his door open be-

hind him and went to the city to see Father Laferty. He had read certain letters signed by an unknown name with a familiar twist in their phrasing. It might be there would be encouragement for him even under the shadow of the Cathedral that had thrust his friend and pattern out. He would confess and say farewell. After that — it should be for Judy to appoint his destiny, under God.

He would not go to Father Hunniwell. The bitterness of adding to the load already borne by him was the hardest element, humanly speaking, in this ordeal. Father Hunniwell was too ardent a Catholic to be able to understand the present pass to which the experience of the last weeks had led his follower. The discipline imposed upon him had only enhanced his submission. The entirety of his sacrifice was the chief treasure of his soul. He repudiated every former hint of scepticism, scored the modernists as heretics among which he was not to be numbered only by the divine intervention of his superiors, who saw and saved, when his peril became deadly. Watching his course, from day to day, Julian felt there was danger of his losing all the individuality which had made him more than his priesthood, since his one desire now seemed to be for complete self-annihilation under the rod that chastened his intelligence together with his ambition and the sin of free will. He exulted in his own abasement.

How could his disciple go to him, the humble saint whose life was the unanswerable refutation of his heresy, and by deserting his standards discredit so noble a victory over self? Julian felt, as far as he was concerned, Father Hunniwell would rightly feel that example was in vain, if under such influence he was capable of wavering. Yet the more he marvelled at the priest for his submission and envied him the certainty of his conviction, the less he could reconcile his own spirit to such blind misuse of rare gifts in a world so needing just such blending of brain and heart.

They had been friends since Julian was a boy. There had been nothing comparable to that friendship, in spite of disparity in years, except his feeling for Reverdy, which had been cut off when it was most vital to his future. To leave Father Hunniwell now, without hope of eventual return, was to hurt him as no one else could wound, because no one else had been so close to him and given such unjustifiable hope for the future of united aspiration. It was too much like desertion, now that Father Hunniwell had been publicly scourged. Before, it would have been renunciation. It was a hateful step, yet one it was treason to delay.

Father Lafferty was writing by the last rays of the sun, his head bent lower and lower over his work until his face almost touched the paper. He did not hear Julian at first, following his own

thoughts too deeply to come to the surface of the external at once. Actually hitting the high piled pages of manuscript before him with the tip of his long nose, he started, glanced up with the impulsive fear of being observed in an absurdity, and in so doing was aware of his visitor's presence. He arose eagerly and stretched both hands in welcome, recalling to Julian, as he did so, the painting of Christ and the monks in the lunette at San Marco, called "Hospitality"; so benignly shone the face of the good old unshaken soul within this gnarly frame.

"Have you read any of these pamphlets published without signature?" he asked, after their first salutation had been exchanged.

"Refuting or confirming?" Julian enquired.

"Both and neither," Father Lafferty replied, putting several in his hands as he spoke. He was not altogether surprised to find one of his own among them. The thing that did surprise him was that several more pronounced were neither his own nor those of Father Hunniwell. They looked at each other without speaking. Julian threw back his head in his boyhood manner.

"It is not about any of these I have come to find you, Father," he said deliberately, "I want to talk to you under the seal, until I am sure of my own position and you fully understand what it is. One of these only is mine. The rest I have no responsibility for."

Father Lafferty took them as he extended them, giving them back to the soul accountable.

"No, I knew that, for these are mine," he admitted simply.

Again they looked long in each other's faces.

"I came to confess—" Julian began.

"You shall stay to discuss. I will not receive your confession until we have cleared up all such existing confusion."

Julian's eyes fell upon the pamphlets. "You too, Father Lafferty?" There was sorrow but infinite relief in the cry.

The old priest seated himself and motioned toward the only other chair. "Tell me how it began and where you stand. Do not hesitate. I shall not misapprehend."

Julian began with his writing, but Father Lafferty held up a detaining hand.

"Begin at what motive sent you into the church as a priest," he directed.

So he began again back in boyhood when, after his mother's death, she having turned Catholic under powerful influences at Rome, he was put into a confirmation class without question. Later, in his aunt's New England surroundings the beauty of it haunted him. In his years of adolescence it was the legitimate outlet of his hidden longing for something—he knew not what. All that was sensuous in him, restrained by chilly unesthetic New England,

went in the deeper to the mysticism of his mother's religion. He liked to act it out, there being something in him that longed for dramatic expression. Later the discovery of his art had driven out the religious dramatisation of his inner self. He found, in creation, that expression for which he hungered. He held nothing back. When he came to the experience of his youth with Judith, and later when life had brimmed over the glass for them once, for one tragic hour, he spared neither Father Lafferty nor himself one pitiless link in the chain.

"I was doomed from the first," he admitted, "for I sinned against my truest self. In my despair and weakness I turned to the church to lose myself as some men do in love and some in art. I took it as a drug. I let my boyhood's friend, Father Hunniwell, carry me wherever he would. I gave up my will not in noble surrender but an acquiescent failure. I had one man in America who understood. If he had not died, he would have kept me from so fatal a mistake. He knew my nature. He warned me before. He never confused the sensuousness of the artist with the quality necessary to the making of a priest. As a boy the Mass gave me supernatural sensations. I believed I could make it my life. After I saw Judith at Beauchamp, when she told me she was to leave her husband and why, I faltered. Then I threw myself more fanatically than ever into my career. My writing, though always

anonymous, I see now came near infidelity to the outward tenets of the order I had assumed. It was not absolutely fidelity to prepare myself to serve as a priest in the most restricted communion, and at the same time hold views I was not ready to openly avow; views frankly at variance with the close confines of educational freedom and scientific speculation unpermitted by the church. But I was willing, at a hint from Father Hunniwell, to renounce all that, and did, hoping to be lost in the wonder of mysticism. It was inevitable that in America the waves of reason and education should go over him. He felt himself able to reconcile the extremes of faith and modernism. In our talks together, sharing his vision, my boundless egoism and ambition set me free for a time from dominion of the love that had crazed me. For a time the church and its dreams possessed me wholly and undisputed — the church and the career it opened to me beside Father Hunniwell. Then I saw Her again. After that first meeting my dream was to bring her over. I need not follow it out. You will know it all. You must have heard it all so many times before! If I was to recant and preserve the respect of my world, it should have been done then, while Father Hunniwell was at the climax of his power here. I realise that. To renounce then would have been willingness at least to suffer separation from him and all his influence could do

for me in the eyes of men. Now it will savour of cowardice, desertion, or sullen defeat. Judith, even, will have the right to think me a quitter, a turncoat, unable to accept discipline, weak in the most vital quarter,—yet she herself is honest, and was when she came to offer me what was so unexpectedly hers to give. She changed, and she dared declare it. She may or may not despise me. That does not alter my attitude or determination.”

Father Lafferty's head was propped by both hands. His set muscles drew like cords. His attention was strained and he moistened his lips as a man does under intense excitement. Julian observed it silently. He went back to his narrative where he had left off. “You know what happened, then; Father Hunniwell was silenced. It was a staggering blow to me,—surpassing the agony of dismemberment. He submitted. When he received his charge I waited for a time, then followed him. The more beautiful his submission, the more I raged within, for him. In the dreary meagreness of his hill parish, with no glamour of accessory to blind me, I wrote and thought as never before. I am going to claim those articles now. I shall tell not the truth but the whole truth. Then it will be over.”

He ceased speaking. Father Lafferty remained motionless. “Continue,” he directed, much after the manner of the actual confessional.

Julian told him then briefly of the contagion which swept the vicinity of their present labours, smiting the faithful and the heretic alike, driving Judith and himself into daily, nightly comradeship in their ministration to the sick and dying. "After these weeks of service together in God's sight, I know that any church that limits the love of God is too small for me. I renounce my communion as less than the universal love of God and his children. I cannot hold the love of a fellow being as blasphemy against His will. What the church can never condone, Art shall immortalise. I will make in marble the virtue beyond any the church has canonised. I will cut with my chisel not the conception of a trance, a morbid vision of asceticism, but a real woman! Man's mate as God made her and wanted her to be. If Judith will, we will begin over, outside the narrow garden of Eden of thou-shalt-not, where knowledge was heresy, but where free will and womanhood and manhood begin with personal responsibility for every deed and thought."

Father Lafferty lifted his head and with his fingers drew a cross upon the table before him. He closed his eyes for little, opening them again full of resolution. At last he spoke. "You realise the confusion you will produce by drawing back,—an impression, far worse than any mere scandal, made upon others liable to find themselves in your case? You have considered that desire for personal grati-

fication will have no weight with the Bishop? He will not show mercy to one whose desire is set upon a divorced woman,—rather will he consign you to hell than that the whole youthful body of the coming priesthood should suffer danger from your example. You have also accepted, as of less account, the grief and dismay you are about to inflict upon one who has borne much and triumphed over self, in the holy longing to inspire others by the sweetness of his own sacrifice to divine demand?"

"Yes." Julian was pale and the one word cut, but it gave no hint of yielding.

"And you still persist in the darkness of your determined course?"

"I have told you it was like nothing but dismemberment, to tear myself from the church, where I long at least to remain as the weakest of its communicants, but life is more than creed, and truth more than contention," he affirmed steadily. "The Puritan side of me is rampant, refusing to be laid. Freedom of conscience, will, love, life is uppermost. I envy every workman swinging his pail on his way to his home at night, I a captive behind bars against which the fires of hell could not prevail to set me at liberty. I was led into a mistake. I cannot believe as a man must believe, or profess to believe, and remain inside the church. I relinquish my vows before I take them. Do what you will with me. Discipline has not cowed me nor has lust se-

duced me. It is the error into which I fell, at variance with the living whole truth of life which has confronted me. I overestimated my power to stultify my brain, to hypnotise my understanding. Go with me to the Bishop! Beg him not to believe me a profaner of sacred things, only implore him to let me go, for I can never be a priest!"

Father Lafferty rose, his whole figure an incredulous protest.

"Condemn me if you must," Julian cried, "I have been about to swear more than I could perform. I have been almost committed forever to something to which my manhood cannot consent."

"We will discuss your compunctions together later," Father Lafferty began. "You are in no fit condition of mind to weigh cause and effect adequately, at the present time. Let me beg of you go into retreat immediately. After that, I will confer with you again."

Julian shook his head. "I am offering you conclusion not conjecture," he said gently. How was he to know the shock that had sent the old priest reeling from his own adventures into reason back to the darkest corner of conservatism?

"I purpose to leave the country at once."

A dreadful tremor seized his listener.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" Julian begged, reverting to his own suspicion that they were more united than either had ever known.

"I neither condemn nor approve," the priest said, as if it came from him over dry lips. "If I had been perfect in fidelity, could this have come to pass? I accuse only myself, against whom I know most offence. If your superior and director had not stumbled, would you and Father Hunniwell have fallen?"

"Faith made Saint Paul free,"—Julian suggested, hoping for further confidence.

Father Lafferty sat down and buried his head on his hands. His conflict was more severe. An old man, nurtured in the faith, given vision only to see the impassable strait between the unreconcilable past and present of divine plan and presence in the universe. To doubt was indeed disloyalty,—yet with Julian, to falter was to go in darkness toward the divine.

"If you will not bless me, at least let me go in peace," Julian said tenderly.

"We may not part for long," Father Lafferty said bravely, making visible effort for control—
"My earthly course is not for long and I would rather have finished it in unbroken calm, but what I have "written I have written," for I too heard a voice that said unto me, write! We may both be exiles, my dear son, in less time than we think. If I cannot aid you, it is for the same reason that holds me from exhortation or rebuke. I cannot falsely bid you remain,—for I may soon be going too.

Though I pray Death may find me before I become a stumbling block and a reproach! Our blessed Father Hunniwell shames me into contrition. Beside him I am chief of sinners. Pray for me, that I may repent the past and be forgiven my lack of subjection to the only infallible source of truth and light — Rome.”

 Their parting was only a mute gaze of farewell.

CHAPTER XXIV

AMO ERGO SUM

IT was at the most exclusive and fashionable of the many famous Baths in France, one August five years after the events so critical to the destiny of his friends, that Orren Kerr stopped short in crossing the magnificent marble rotunda of the Thermal Palace, with an involuntary cry.

It was caused by a statue placed in the courtyard of the institution at such an angle that one saw it by all four entrances from the street. The patients borne by it in bath chairs leaned out to look at it as they passed and there was hardly one in all the varying throng who refused it a glance, while strangers were constantly driving up in motor cars and going inside just long enough to add their homage with the rest.

It was a life-size figure of a woman, a mother, one saw without instruction beyond one's own intuition, with a sick child in her arms, while another in regal health stood looking up into her face. It was not alone the beauty of conception, or mastery of technique, or even the amazing spiritual signif-

icance of art so employed that made the marble speak aloud to him. It was the fact that he recognised the model. When he had stared at it long enough and somewhat recovered his balance, he seated himself at a table outside on the pavement and called a waiter to him.

"Who made that statue?" he demanded, pointing within.

The man glanced in the direction indicated as he dusted off the table in readiness for the order.

"I have never heard," he said, carelessly, watching a party being wedged into a giant limousine at the curb.

"Is he French or English?"

The servant's eyes hurried back to his table. "Oh, French without doubt."

Orren laid a twenty-franc gold piece on the empty table. "Go and find out. Don't come back till you do, or —" he covered the gold with his hand, implying the rest. He rolled a cigarette as he waited, put it in his mouth and forgot to light it. The servant returned all complaisance. "The statue so fortunate as to be admired by M'sieur le Duc —" he began.

"No you don't! Cut that out," jerked Orren Kerr, "I am lots more than a duke. Go on with your instructions."

"Eh bien, M'sieur is an American? Perfectly! The statue that has the honour to please

M'sieur is not by a French artist, but one of the distinguished countrymen of M'sieur; a certain M'sieur Craigie, who inhabits California, South America. The Director had also the amiability to add that he is at this moment at Midimare on the coast of Normandy, executing a commission for Paris."

Orren snapped the coin at him and left the place. It was a superbly hot August afternoon when he got down from his car at the almost deserted railway station. Everything swam in mere heat, a very unusual atmosphere even with a land breeze for this part of the world. The tiny train dumped itself into the station with jerk and tremble that made it quiver from the locomotive to the last coach. The idle porters, three in number, came forward to claim each a piece of his luggage. Even the guard came to the wicket of egress with him to reassure himself that M'sieur had in reality carried out his intention to descend. It all looked to Orren like an unprofitable investment. He stood glaring about him. On the station were the letters that confirmed him. "Midimare." Yes, this must be it.

"Hot as Tophet," he remarked in a stage aside, presumably to himself. He chose a cab, it was between a blind horse and a lame one, and began his ascent, up and up, toward the coast. When it had been forever and several more eternities the driver stopped short at the iron gate of a garden.

The vines hung lavishly over the high wall soliciting admiration. Cool tree-tops waved inside, and voices of children at play came to him maddeningly.

He dismissed his convoy and rang the bell, waited, and rang again.

A gardener with a giant sickle opened the gate to him. He wondered if it was a son of Time or the old man himself.

"Mr. Julian Craigie,—does he live here?" he asked.

The old man smiled. His only answer was to fling the gate wide. At the first glance Orren also felt there was nothing more to be said.

On the high terrace strolled a peacock, after which toddled Julian second. He needed no further introduction. A little at one side Judith second was chasing its mate.

"Look! I am a peacock," the boy shouted to him, entirely unabashed—"Watch me make believe spread my tail!"

Then he saw Judith by the stucco rail at the edge of the high terrace, waving her hand to some one far down on the shore below. At the outcry from her son, she turned and saw who was coming. They met each other half way.

"Blessed old Orren!" she exclaimed gaily, but with much emotion in her voice.

"Judy in excelsis, by all the Gods!" he returned.

He stared into her eyes, holding her by her

shoulders so she could not escape his scrutiny. Then he told her without preamble how he had found them out; adding, "I came to see how it was with you for Reverdy's sake, but I have no need to ask. Didn't I tell you so?"

"You did, Orren, you could not make me believe it then, though."

"Got the answers to the problems right, at last?"

"Yes. Reverdy said I would. He knew, and life is all so simple now. It is just to love some one better than oneself," she agreed, with her radiant manner which he never remembered so radiant before.

"You have come into your own, and I am glad of it," Orren declared, tersely.

"You were right and I was wrong. I have lived to see that self-made shrines are bound to be overturned by the principles of creation. And to believe that one person who is happy does more for life than all those who fix their eyes on sin and sadly attack it in others." He seated himself on the balustrade: she still standing, facing the sea.

"And you are happy? Having thrown over all your principles and dreams and ideals and become just like anybody else? I never would have thought it of you."

Judith threw up her chin in her old defiant fashion.

"We may turn the original curse into a blessing

if we will, but we have got to come under it, if we are women. And whatever Eve did to the serpent, man still does to her."

"You admit it, do you?"

"I glory in it! We may flout him, but he is always there, in our inmost being, where only God may go. We are haunted by him, destined for him, lost in him and worse lost without him. In him we forget Nature's material reason for us and believe ourselves a miracle of unique passion. We are the world's prophecy, man's tangible shadow."

"What about that individuality of yours that used to worry you?"

She shook her head impatiently. "Was I ever such a dunce at the alphabet of life? Why, we women are only of value because you men need us, only of use when you take us, only to be pitied when you do not want us. To give, to be spent, to be the source of joy and power, and the torch desire lights, and life carries on, is the kingdom of women; never hers, always His. It is enough: if the man is great, and bequeaths something of one's adoration to succeeding ages, it is more than enough, it is canonisation."

"What is Julian making out of this miracle?"

"He is working the miracle, doing just this. His work will survive. It is as truly a part of me as the children of our blood. No one will ask who the woman was who gave herself to be the fuel for

the flame of his genius. That is as I wish it. We are bound, Julian and I, by sense and soul. I am not merely an ideal, not merely his human mate,—I am that strange other self that a man can never entirely possess—though we have passionate children like ourselves, whose birth pangs are every woman's shrivings beyond the absolution of any mortal's power to declare. I was his for whatever he wanted me. He took me, and deified me by giving himself to me. Our children shall reverence love supremely, as God's own reflection."

"That is all very well on the stage, but people are not so exalted. Everybody blames you outside—" he reminded her bluntly.

She smiled. Oh, the unearthly beauty of her now! He shivered with despair over it. "Why should any blame me?" she asked.

"Why? You ask me why? You have turned your back on all the Ten Commandments, according to Pauline *et al.* And you have let Julian turn from the black petticoats to a great sculptor, all for love! Julian has dished hypocrisy and you have flouted society, and the crowning sin is that you are both dead right though they are scared to admit it, and I wish to God there were more happy sinners just like you!"

"Wait, Orren. You must hear exactly what did happen to Julian. It was no light burden he as-

sumed in leaving the Church. Nor did he leave it, it left him. When he and I had fought contagion together till it slunk slowly out of sight, he took his reckonings over again. When he knew himself unable to believe blindfold and accept authority as final, he confessed and was ex-communicated. This outer darkness was all very tragic to him, but he felt it was not the whole truth to keep silence any longer, as so many others have shrewdly done. At first I thought the blow would kill him. He was left on the field for dead by every one else but me. His collapse was desperate. That part I cannot tell you —”

“Never mind, skip to California,” he suggested.

“We had each other. That was all and enough. We went to California because it is a home of broad hopes and wide charity, as you said. We neither of us care to go back to the narrowness we left behind. Julian has been a martyr to his convictions and I have only been the victim of mine. I have not his consolation for I was only a fool trying to right the universe instead of trusting the Almighty to do what He saw fit with the world He made and subjected to his own conditions.”

He knew by her face that some one was coming behind him,—turning, he saw Julian swinging up the steep path from the sea, with his usual flying gait, his colour heightened from a hard swim gave added brilliancy to his appearance. Orren felt sud-

denly old. He saw too, in spite of the cordial welcome, both hands extended to him, that any third presence still irked these two who would never cease to be lovers. In the way Julian's eyes went to hers it was evident that their eagerness for each other was unabated, and that even an hour apart was something to be grudged and made up for. He declined their importunity for a longer visit, accordingly, after an hour or more of desultory chat over their tea, graced by fruit and wine; promising to hunt them up some day, in California after their return.

"They told me you were doing something for Paris. Some big memorial,— or was it a Virgin and Child?" he asked in the course of their mutual clearing house, exchanging news of themselves and their circle.

"No, a woman," Julian corrected. "There is enough of the supernatural in any human woman without imposing imaginary holiness. That is one thing I am trying to do. I want to preach that gospel until art is lifted out of one of her oldest errors. I want to dwell upon, and repeat and transfigure the human till it reaches up to the divine right before our eyes."

Orren nodded. "Lots of the divine lying round loose in humanity, if anybody was bright enough to see it," he agreed, then turning to Judith, "and what about your career? Pauline will want to know

about that. She never approved of it until you agreed with her; paradoxical as that may sound."

"Poor Polly!" Judith said softly, "she knows as well as I do that a man is all the career any woman needs and more of one than most of us are equal to."

Julian came to her rescue, glad to share their ambitions with so true a friend of their own creed. "We are trying to make our lives into art, together," he said. "We believe it our first duty to express whatever ecstasy is our own, in terms of spiritual existence, and after that to immortalise our most vivid moments through fixed forms."

"We did our best to help others. Now we are just thanking God for life!" Judith broke in. "Pauline will be relieved to know you still have one to thank. She supposes you both infidels."

"We believe in God, not man's scant version or perversion of Him," Julian explained. "We do more than that, we praise Him day and night!"

"Just as we believe in law, but not always man's administration of it," Judith amplified.

"How long shall you be here?" Orren asked.

"Only a little while longer. Europe is too indulgent toward the sin we do not commit to be the home for our children. We want the vigour of a young world to work with. Come to us, Orren, out on your Western coast, where the slow Pacific hits the sunset and you will discover how little good

there is in quarrelling with men and how good it is to keep out of the mud they splash. Life is too sweet and swift to spend it within the dimensions of one's own grave and we do not mean to be of those 'who sleep before evening.'"

As he spoke a child appeared with a wreath of seaweed tangled upon her head, and her hands full of pearly-lined sea shells. She was a gleeful little brunette with eyes unlike theirs and a jubilant lilt to her baby voice as she broke from her nurse and ran to them.

"This is Drake's little daughter," Judith said. "You knew perhaps that her mother left him shortly after the birth of their child. He has given her to us until she is old enough to be with him, and has gone on an indefinite trip round the world. We came over to get her. The children call her sister already. It is a great delight to feel we are so trusted. We mean to make her a very noble woman and fit for happiness when her turn comes," she added fondly.

"Shall I tell Paula this, too?" he enquired quizzically, as he arose to go.

"Listen, Orren, you must not go back and misrepresent us or say things that will distress Paula—"

"I shall distress her, I shall tell her you two misguided heretics believe God is love, and what is worse, practise what you preach!"

“If Reverdy were alive he never would misunderstand,” Julian said, glancing away from them out to sea as he spoke the name they all three loved best.

“He is and he does understand,” cried Judith. “Tell them, Orren, all of them, that the kiss of Apollo is just as fatal to overturn any shrine as it ever was, because women are still true at heart, Pagans, Nature worshippers! Tell them I love—therefore I am! Or, no, tell them nothing at all,—they would not understand.”

THE END



